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Shoot!

Frank Stapleton, seen here jumping with Norwich's Dave Watson, is a key figure in Manchester United's Championship challenge.

Man United CAN THEY TAKE THE TITLE?

Portsmouth

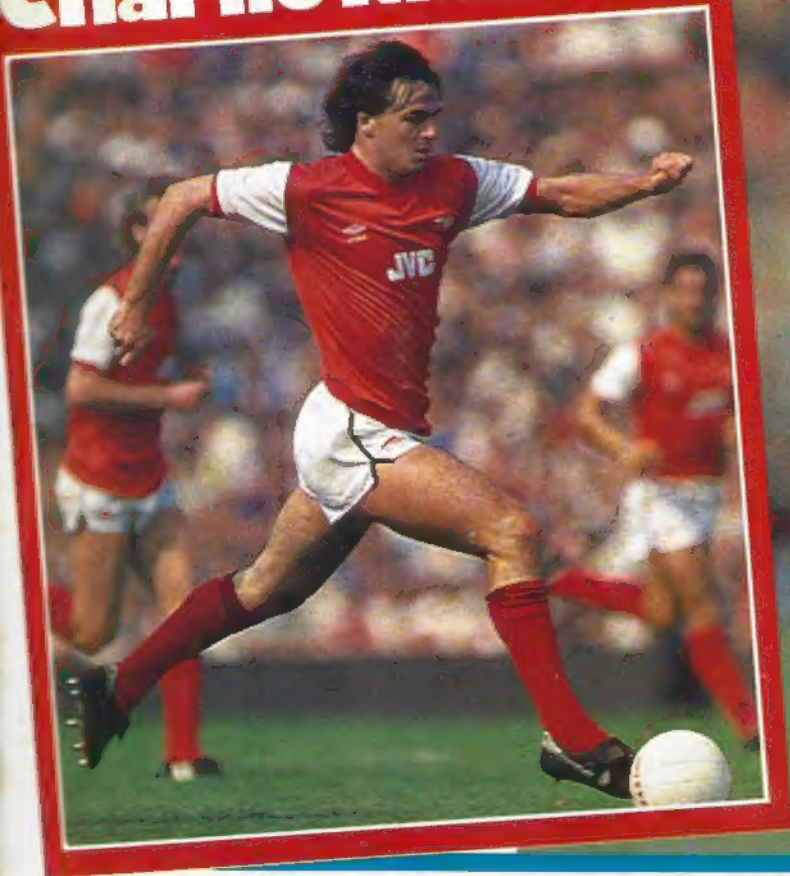
Team group + Spotlight

DALGLISH AGONY FOR LIVERPOOL

'Saints saved my life'

MARK DENNIS

At last—goals for
Charlie Nicholas



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Are Manchester United good

RON Atkinson committed Manchester United to the awesome task of overhauling Liverpool in the race for the Canon League Championship when he promised: "We owe it to our fans and ourselves to win the Championship."

Big Ron's brave pledge was delivered in a few emotional seconds after the F.A. Cup-holders had crashed out of the competition at Bournemouth.

Manchester United have not won the Championship since Bobby Charlton, George Best and Denis Law wove red magic across First Division pitches in the 1966-67 season, the year after England won the World Cup.

Are Manchester United good enough to fulfil Ron Atkinson's promise? Are they as good as the 'Red Devils' of '67?

We place the Old Trafford club under a critical microscope...



Roy Wilkins is on hand to put United 1-0 up against West Ham.

Shoot! v Star

MANAGER

SHOOT: There is no denying that Ron Atkinson has made a success of a job that has destroyed some of his predecessors. He has spent United's money wisely in the transfer market. He steered the club to success in the F.A. Cup last season and to the Final of the Milk Cup, two Wembley appearances that justified his spending. His capture of Jesper Olsen, the brilliant Dane, illustrates his courage and determination to restore United to the heights they scaled in the 50's and 60's. If there is any criticism of Ron Atkinson, it is that he kept Norman Whiteside in the team when his goals had dried-up, and has not always got the best out of Arnold Muhren.

ROBSON: I am biased when it comes to talking about the boss. He's strong, brave, and very knowledgeable about the game, yet still keeps his sense of humour. It's not easy handling a team of international players but he never shirks a decision.

GOALKEEPER

SHOOT: Gary Bailey has not made the progress this season that he did in his early days. He should have forced Ray Clemence on to the England sidelines this season as understudy to Peter Shilton, but he is by no means certain to make the grade as Shilton's successor. He lacks the consistency that has always been a feature of an England goalkeeper's technique.

ROBSON: I can't agree with that. It's great that England have two goalkeepers perfectly capable of taking over from Shilton. I'm referring to our Gary, and Nigel Spink, of Aston Villa. Gary has agility, size, and the right attitude. He is always willing to learn — and the more experience he gains, the better he gets. If I have any criticism of Gary, and he knows what I'm going to say, he lacks a little bit of concentration. Manchester United see a tremendous amount of the ball, but if we lose possession, Gary is sometimes caught out.



'We owe it to our fans and ourselves to win the Championship'
— Ron Atkinson's pledge

DEFENCE

SHOOT: It is hard to fault United's defence even though they have suffered their share of injuries. John Gidman, Gordon McQueen and Kevin Moran have been notable absentees in the past two seasons. They are hard to penetrate but give away too many soft goals from set-piece situations, though injury has harmed the understanding that a regular back-four establish. Moran must learn to curb his commitment which often imperils him physically and is sometimes unnecessary. Mike Duxbury would benefit from knowing his true position, full-back or centre-half, though injury has often dictated which position he plays.

ROBSON: I have to agree with some of your remarks. We are talking about an outstanding group of players, who 90 per cent of the time are brilliant. We lapse occasionally on crosses. Injuries have upset us a bit and I agree that Duxbury has moved about too much for his own liking. His best position is right-back, Ron Atkinson knows that and so does Bobby Robson. But Remi Moses has done a smashing job when he's come in at full-back and Mike



enough to take the title?

YES



as always, is the most complete midfielder player in Europe. Sadly, Arnold Muhren has not always captured the form that thrilled Ipswich fans, and Arthur Graham, superb in attack, has not performed the midfield duties as effectively as Steve Coppell.

ROBSON: Things have been going well. Arnold, Ray and myself have scored our share of goals but I would agree that Steve Coppell's departure cost us a bit defensively. Having said that, I think Arthur Graham has made us

boil. If they are to remain serious rivals to Liverpool in the Championship race they must produce the same consistency, week in, week out. They draw games they should win, often because they allow a lead to slip, as they did against Norwich away and Notts County at home. They should be admired for rising to the challenge of a game against Liverpool or Spurs, but too often draw with teams they should bury.

ROBSON: I can't argue that. It still hurts when I think of the



Judge Bobby Charlton's verdict

I WOULD like to say straight away that I think this Manchester United side can win the Canon League this season.

I can remember the Championship winning team of 1967 saying: "We fancy our chances." I fancy United's chances this season.

I thoroughly enjoy watching Ron Atkinson's side play football and believe they have the right balance to succeed.

My main criticism is that they get a bit stretched at the back, and lack the ruthlessness that is often necessary to win Championships.

When I say ruthlessness, I don't mean that they should kick people. They should do what Liverpool do. If they have you by the throat, they don't let go.

It disturbs me also that they have to play men out of position to cover for injuries. Mike Duxbury goes to centre-half, Remi Moses fills in at full-back. They do admirably but it's not quite the same as having a specialist player available in reserve.

Winning

Now to answer the big question: Is the current Manchester United as good as our Championship winning team?

We had the greater individuals but we could be very erratic. Sometimes I never knew what was going to happen when we got on the pitch.

It was more physical in those days. Defenders tackled from behind then. Billy Foulkes would probably get booked in every game if he played today. Never dirty, but hard.

I never liked the physical stuff, so I wouldn't have minded playing in today's football where they lay-off you.

We got the ball forward quicker than the current United team. We didn't play it across the park much. I watched a recording of the 1968 European Cup Final triumph and noticed how quickly we put Benfica under pressure.

Yes, we were better individually, with George Best at his peak, but collectively, I'd say we were slightly inferior to the current United side.

I am confident they can win the League Championship, despite their setbacks in the two domestic Cups against Third Division opposition.

Those defeats could be just the jolt they need to overtake Liverpool if Joe Fagan's men slip-up.

writer Bryan Robson

has never let us down at centre-back. He's better than a good many First Division centre-halves. Kevin Moran and Gordon McQueen have had their share of injuries. It's fair to say that they have one or two 'cagey' games when they return after injury, not attacking the ball quite as competitively as they would in an injury-free run. But what a pair, Gordon very fast, good in the air, and a good 'reader' of situations; Kevin, a natural attacker of the ball, powerful in the tackle, and fair with it. And let's not forget Arthur Albiston, Scotland's best left-back.

MIDFIELD

SHOOT: It was not a pretty sight to see United's midfield overrun by Oxford United and Bournemouth. This department is magic when it is ticking smoothly, but United rely too much on Bryan Robson's prodigious efforts. Ray Wilkins has been superbly efficient and effective, creating many goals that have kept United in the Championship hunt, and Robson,



Frank Stapleton

better going forward. I've heard it said that United are not so effective when I'm missing from the team. That's very unfair, you know. I didn't play four games on the trot, against Coventry, Notts County, Stoke and Liverpool, and we remained unbeaten. I can't accept what you say about Arnold. He perhaps stood out more at Ipswich where they have fewer big names. At United, he is happy to be a key member of a team, as I am, and as Ray Wilkins and Frank Stapleton are.

ATTACK

SHOOT: Frank Stapleton has confirmed his reputation as one of Europe's best strikers. Leading goalscorer for United last season, he is well ahead of his team-mates again this season. The trouble is that the Irishman does not get enough support from his co-striker Norman Whiteside. Arthur Graham has scored more goals than many thought possible from an out and out winger, but lack of goal-punch is clearly one of United's biggest weaknesses.

ROBSON: Frank Stapleton has done a great job for two seasons, so often scoring that crucial goal. I'd like to make the point that Manchester United rate Norman Whiteside a great player. Contrary to some reports, the boss wants him to stay at Old Trafford. But I agree that Norman has struggled a bit over two seasons since that World Cup performance that astonished the Irish supporters, and the rest of us. Young players in any position need careful handling. All youngsters go through bad patches and perhaps United should have taken more pressure off him than they have. His is a pressure job. The fans expect Norman to score goals all the time — and us to win the Championship.

CONSISTENCY

SHOOT: United make a habit of winning or drawing games over several weeks and then go off the

Norwich and Notts County games. We've got to get harder, not physically, but in our attitude. We must learn to kill teams.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHANCES

SHOOT: There is a determination about this Manchester United side that says they want to emulate the Bobby Charlton inspired side that last won the Championship in 1966-67. Bryan Robson badly wants to win the European Cup for the fans. He knows that to achieve that, United must first win the First Division title in order to qualify. United have never been a club to rely solely on another club's misfortunes to achieve success, but it will be interesting to see whether Kenny Dalglish's absence from the Liverpool team tilts the title-race in United's favour.

ROBSON: Most clubs go through a bad patch, and we've been through ours. We've got the players and the determination to win the title. We've learned from our mistakes and I'm confident that if Liverpool slip-up, we'll be there. My belief is that our supporters can carry us through. To play away from home and run out to the reception we get from our followers is marvellous. I reckon it's worth a goal away from home. I sometimes think that our away fans show more enthusiasm than those at Old Trafford. Our recent performances in the Milk Cup and the F.A. Cup will have no bearing on our chances of lifting the League Championship. We must ensure we become consistent in our games from now to the end of the season. If we manage that then I am convinced we will have no worries. Obviously you can't rule out the likes of West Ham, Nottingham Forest and Southampton but our squad is good enough to win the coveted First Division. Seventeen years is too long between Championships. I reckon we'll make it this time.

BACK with a bang!
That was the title of a recent *Shoot* article about players making spectacular returns after injury or a long spell in the reserves.

I'd hardly call my comeback game against QPR on December 31st sensational, but at least I lasted the pace and had a hand in the two goals that gave Villa victory.

I did manage to score in my second game in the 2-2 draw at Southampton on January 2nd.

Not a bad way to start the New Year you might think? Well, you'd be wrong!

Manager Tony Barton gave the whole Villa team a real verbal lashing before we left The Dell.

He was furious with us for dropping two points. We were two goals up with ten minutes to go but allowed Saints to come back and



A full cap will cost Villa dear! Tony Barton paid £200,000 for the game's hottest teenage property, but agreed a bonus should he gain full honours.

Give Paul another year in the First Division and he could do just that.

Not many youngsters would reject the chance to join Liverpool. Maybe Paul will be given the opportunity of playing against the Champions when they visit Villa Park for this Friday's (January 20th) live TV spectacular.

Naturally I hope I retain my place in the side and maintain my striking form against them. I scored twice against Liverpool in the 4-2 home defeat and was also on target in the 1-1 draw at Anfield last season.

Some people believe the recent injury to Kenny Dalglish could cost Liverpool the title. Of course, they miss a player of his stature, but they are so strong in every

Rideout threatens me

snatch a draw.

That wasn't the first time this season lack of concentration had cost Villa vital points.

Away to Forest, Everton, and the two UEFA Cup games against Moscow Spartak, we let the opposition score late, late goals to rob Villa of victory.

You don't win games if you don't play for the entire 90 minutes.

That's a rule Villa must learn if we are to regain our place back among the pacesetters in the First Division.

Improving concentration isn't the only headache for Tony Barton. He has to choose which striker to leave out each week.

At the moment there are three goalscorers battling for the two central scoring positions... myself, Peter Withe and Paul Rideout.

I haven't included Mark Walters, because he is operating in Tony Morley's old role wide on the left.

Paul was bought from Swindon as a successor to Peter, but they played so well together when I was out injured my place is under threat.

STAR WRITER GARY SHAW

I know Paul was left out when I came back against QPR, but he's not going to be satisfied with reserve team football for very long.

I realise I've got to be at my best every week to beat off the Rideout threat to my position.

He could have joined Liverpool last summer, but chose Villa because he didn't fancy spending two years in the Central League.

Paul told me he wants regular First Division football as soon as possible and felt his chances of that happening were much brighter at Villa.



Peter Withe also influenced Paul's decision to sign for Villa. The prospect of learning his trade from the player Tony Barton rates as the best target man in England was too good an opportunity for Paul to turn down.

Only 18, but already a strapping six-footer, Paul has many of Peter's characteristics. He has a powerful shot, turns sharply, has good control, battles for every ball and spares nothing in training.

Villa is a totally different world from Fourth Division Swindon, but Paul has quickly adapted to the big time because he has the ability that comes through at any level.

Paul is destined for a great future at the club and for England. He won caps at Schoolboy and Youth level when he played alongside Villa's Mark Walters and Ray Walker.

department I can't see that happening.

They certainly didn't look under strength when I saw them thrash Newcastle 4-0 in the F.A Cup on TV the other week.

The man who makes Liverpool tick for me is Graeme Souness. Everything stems from their skipper, so Villa must keep a tight rein on him.

Souness possesses a tremendous shot. He also has that killer instinct all great players possess.

We must also curb the threat of goal-machine Ian Rush... another reason Paul Rideout decided on Villa. The competition would have been even fiercer!

Finally... a big thank you to all those readers who sent me birthday cards. I'm 23 on Saturday so your wishes and a win against Liverpool will make my day complete.

Take care...

SHOOT view!

Loan madness

THE Football League's controversial loan system, already the subject of much ridicule, reached ridiculous proportions when Garth Crooks became the latest "ping pong ball" to be tossed between two clubs.

Not truly wanted by Tottenham Hotspur and not wanted enough by Manchester United for them to sign him permanently, Garth Crooks wound-up back at Tottenham when they ran into crippling injury problems.

Spurs were perfectly entitled

to recall their striker before a crucial F.A. Cup-tie against Fulham. He had left them on "loan" and the League ruling says that a player can be hauled back at any time during the loan period.

Spurs, of course, were hoping that Manchester United would pay the £150,000 transfer fee the White Hart Lane club were demanding for their striker.

Unfortunately, United boss Ron Atkinson had not bitten by the time Crooks answered Keith Burkinshaw's S.O.S., for the

striker to return to London for the Cup-tie.

Surely a First Division club with Manchester United's resources, and playing strength, should not have the opportunity to rely on a system that can offer an unfair advantage.

How would Stoke, Notts County and Birmingham feel if Liverpool decided to loan Kenny Dalglish to Wolves when he recovers from injury?

All four clubs are locked in a desperate battle to avoid relegation and Dalglish's arrival at Molineux could just give them

the fillip they need to escape the big drop in their first season after promotion.

The loan system is unfair on so many people and clubs. For every loan player who makes good by joining the full-time playing staff of a club after a period on loan, there are many who are cast-off when they become of no further use.

Spare a thought for Garth Crooks, one of the League's most popular players, who has been mis-used by two great clubs taking advantage of a ridiculous system.

Roeder (left) is as calm as ever during QPR's F.A. Cup Final clash with Spurs in 1982.



Cockney Roeder wants to be GEORDIE GLENN

GLENN Roeder, Newcastle United's new centre-half from Queens Park Rangers, is a Cockney in the transitional stage of becoming a Geordie.

And already, the 29-year-old Londoner has made friends on Tyneside with his cool, unhurried style in the back four which has brought steadiness to a suspect United defence.

After making his debut in the 1-1 draw with Blackburn Rovers in December, the former Rangers skipper has wasted no time in building up a rapport with the Gallowgate crowd.

"I want to succeed here for the fans," says Roeder.

"I know I can do it for myself, but it is a matter of doing it for them as well. They are absolutely fantastic and I am looking forward to becoming an adopted Geordie."

Ordeal

Like any new player, Glenn faced an ordeal in his opening game, which drew the biggest gate of the season to St. James' Park — 33,802. A gathering of that size, especially when they are Geordies, can be an ordeal for the most experienced player.

And Roeder admits: "I was more nervous before that match than when I led out QPR at Wembley for the F.A. Cup Final in 1982."

"Fortunately, I was alright once I got out on to the turf at St. James'. The only trouble was I kept thinking could there be anything worse than losing on your debut."

Now he is becoming acclimatised to United, Glenn is able to make an assessment of his new team-mates, and his impressions are favourable.

"Everybody makes his contribution in his own way, and it all adds up to Newcastle being a very skilful team," says Roeder.



"We are capable of playing good football and getting the right results."

"My immediate aim is to help the side to stay in a leading place in the League and help them to promotion."

Before he joined Newcastle, Roeder had suffered one major disappointment in his career. He says: "I always wanted to play against Liverpool."

"To me, they were the side you wanted to pit yourself against, to see what you could achieve against the leading side in the land."

"But with Rangers, the nearest I got was when I was sub."

"During the 90 minutes I practically wore out a pair of boots running up and down the track, desperately hoping I would be able to get into the game. But I didn't."

"So I could hardly believe it when Newcastle were drawn against Liverpool in the F.A. Cup."

"Losing 4-0 in that Third Round tie was a terrible disappointment. We didn't give a true account of ourselves."

"Now, I look forward to Anfield next season when I hope to play against them in the First Division."

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Stay with the winning team, Shoot — soccer's most stimulating magazine!

I WARN LIVERPOOL...

WATCH out Liverpool and Manchester United... we're right behind you.

That's my warning to the Big Two as the First Division Championship moves into the second half of the season with familiar names at the top.

It's right in many ways that Liverpool and United are in front but I want them to be quivering in their boots because of what is happening behind them.

I'm speaking for a lot of hard-working managers, honest players, loyal supporters and lovely clubs when I say that if the title race is supposed to be between two pedigrees... you can think again!

The likes of Southampton, Luton, Coventry, ourselves and others don't have the resources to match those at Anfield and Old Trafford, but Lawrie McMenemy, David Pleat, Bobby Gould, big-head Cloughie and a lot of other managers in the First Division are determined to give them a run for their money.

I want Joe Fagan and Ron Atkinson to know that we are on their backs and won't fall off without a fight in the coming months.

We are doing the best we can with our resources and maybe we do wish we had some of the backing that's given to Liverpool, United and, dare we say, Tottenham and Arsenal.

I've spent my millions on Trevor Francis, Ian Wallace and Justin Fashanu in my time but I could only do that because we were winning things... big things.

Now all that's changed and I'm on the same wavelength as Stoke City, who parted company with their manager Richie Barker partly because of going to Anfield with a so-called negative attitude.

I had a "go" at Joe Fagan recently for comments he made about Richie's team after their

defensive performance at Anfield... and I meant every word I said.

I wouldn't detract from it for a minute because I fully understood what Richie Barker was saying when he said they wouldn't be able to provide flowing entertainment at Anfield.

It's very difficult for the Stokes of this world to go and compete on equal terms at Liverpool and only managers in Richie's position would realise what he was attempting to say.

In years to come, it will no doubt get more and more difficult for the minnows to compete with the sharks because the big clubs will get bigger and the small clubs will get smaller.

That's inevitable now that clubs are keeping their own gates. Looking at the situation rationally, clubs are entitled to keep their own gate money but I'm not sure that the motives were right when the proposal was put forward.

Birthdays

It might be a good thing for Manchester United — but what about Notts County, who think all their birthdays have come at once when they get 10,000 through the turnstiles?

There might be a million miles between the financial resources of the two clubs but it didn't prevent County going to Old Trafford just after Christmas and coming back with a 3-3 draw.

We went one better and beat them there earlier in the season and they were not just setbacks for United, they were blows delivered on behalf of the "also rans".

And it's that kind of determination that will always stand a chance of putting a spoke in somebody's big wheel.

Long may it stay that way.



Another Birtles?

YOU might have read that I've signed another striker from non-League football... and I only hope he turns out to be as good as the others, Garry Birtles (from Long Eaton), Peter Davenport (Cammell-Laird) and Steve Wigley (Curzon Aston).

All came to us from amateur football and it can't be bad when they have adapted so quickly to the First Division.

Now David Riley has joined Forest from Keyworth United, a local side in Nottinghamshire. I signed David on the strength

of seeing him play for our reserves against Stoke City.

He scored a hat-trick in a 6-1 win and I saw enough to offer him a full-time contract.

Now it's up to David to make the most of it. He was at Forest as a schoolboy, but he didn't make the grade that time.

Riley is 23, so he's no youngster, but if he applies himself there's no reason why he should not follow the other three into the First Division.

It makes a change from signing £1 million strikers!

The series that goes behind the scenes to examine specialist soccer jobs. This week — The Referee... **GEORGE COURTNEY**

The Invisible Man



Courtney is on the spot as West Ham beat Arsenal in the 1980 F.A. Cup Final.

THEY say the best referee is the one who never gets noticed. So if people regard me as an anonymous figure it suits me fine — for it shows I am doing my job properly.

I have been on the League list for ten years now and have only hit the headlines twice — both in games I took charge of at Wembley.

On both occasions I was accused of acting leniently and not sending off players who were supposed to have committed professional fouls. No doubt you still remember the incidents.

The first came in the dying minutes of the 1980 F.A. Cup Final when West Ham beat Arsenal 1-0. Teenager Paul Allen broke clear to the edge of the area and was just about to shoot when Willie Young whipped his legs away.

STAR WRITER

BRIAN CLOUGH

Liverpool's Mike Robinson goes between Kenny Swain and Paul Hart, but I'm warning the League Champions that we at Forest aim to pinch their title.



We really enjoyed our UEFA Cup win at Celtic — a tremendous result.

Silence is golden

I CAN reveal the stirring words I used to inspire Forest to our famous UEFA Cup victory at Celtic — none!

I didn't need to give them a talk. I just sent them out half an hour before the kick-off and that was enough to gee them all up.

There were 67,000 fans at Parkhead that night, and people said the atmosphere would scare my lads stiff. But I knew them better and they really enjoyed silencing all those Scotsmen.

Brian Clough

It was the only incident in the entire match. I never for one moment considered sending Young off and could not understand all the fuss it caused.

Then, in last season's Milk Cup Final between Liverpool and Manchester United, I came under fire for allowing Bruce Grobbelaar to remain on the pitch after he raced from his goal and brought down Gordon McQueen.

There was no question of the United man being deprived of a goal-scoring opportunity, because he could not possibly have got to the ball — he was too shattered!

In fact as I arrived on the scene McQueen was the first to say to me: "Don't you dare send him off."

I looked at the incident again on video just the other night and remain convinced I took the right course of action. It's a man's game and you have to allow for the fact that knocks are inevitable.

One thing that annoys me is the constant clamour for professional referees. What nonsense — as far as I'm concerned I AM a professional referee.



IN FOCUS

Age 62. Became a League linesman in 1971 and promoted to referee two years later. Joined the FIFA panel in 1977 and has refereed all round Europe, Australia and Zambia in major matches. Has had the F.A. Cup Final, Milk Cup Final and F.A. Trophy Final in five appearances at Wembley. Will become the League's longest serving and senior referee next season.

I could not be in better condition if I was training several hours a day, seven days a week. And being paid more for the job would not make any difference to my decisions.

I think a lot of people in the game take themselves far too seriously and there is not much fun in the business. So I try to inject a light-hearted touch as often as possible.

For instance, I took charge of a game at Liverpool soon after their skipper, Graeme Souness, had appeared in an episode of the BBC television series *Boys From The Blackstuff* with the legendary Yasser Hughes.

As Souness came to the centre circle I leaned across and whispered 'Glissa job'. I won't tell you what his answer was — but he lost the toss as well!

Chocolate and tea figure

prominently in my pre-match diet. I drink gallons of tea on a Saturday and carry chocolate wherever I go. I once wrote to a manufacturer asking if they would sponsor me. They refused!

I always get to the ground in good time, around noon. I go for a stroll around the area, chatting to any fans I might see to make myself known.

I get together with my linesmen to let them know what I expect of them, stressing that if we are 100 per cent prepared there is a 99 per cent chance we will get through the game well.

We analyse our performance during the half-time interval — when I have a complete change of strip because I sweat so much.

And I never socialise after a game — not that we are encouraged to anyway. I have a couple of beers in my dressing room, then head for my Spennymoor home.

Southampton cannot win the League Championship title, says manager Lawrie McMenemy. But is the statement a crafty bid by the Saints boss to take all the pressure off the Championship dark horses?

As 1984 and the second-half of the title chase starts to unfold, Southampton are in the midst of the chasing pack as Liverpool try to pull clear towards their third successive title.

McMenemy's frequent claim has been: "We don't have the players or resources to challenge the major clubs."

"Liverpool, Manchester United, Tottenham and Arsenal can go out and spend big sums on players. We cannot do that and are unlikely



A long term jaw injury to brilliant England Under-21 international Mark Wright meant a reshuffle in the Southampton defence. Reuben Agboola swapped his sweeper job for a central defensive role alongside Kenny Armstrong, the Scot acquired in the close season.

New boy Dennis slotted in at left-back, with England veteran Mick Mills on the other side. Even the loss of a defender of Wright's calibre has not rocked Saints.

The experience of England goalkeeper Peter Shilton has been a major factor in Saints' consistency at the back and Mills' knowledge is another reason.

Further forward, McMenemy's shrewd knowledge has at last brought the best out of Steve Williams.

At Tottenham recently, Williams

showed his quality against Glenn Hoddle and even McMenemy admitted: "I would love to see Steve and Glenn together in the England side. You certainly wouldn't want to play against them because they would be the combination of everything you want in the engine room."

David Armstrong has been a vital part of the success. And Alan Curtis' arrival from Swansea for £80,000 means there is cover up front for the strikers.

Should one of his star strikers be injured McMenemy can still put out a talented team.

It all adds up to some hard work over a long period and quiet, steady progress. McMenemy might be right in claiming his side cannot win the title this season. But they could go closer than the big man would have you believe.

Crafty Lawrie



to be able to do so at any time in the future. And, of course, we don't have the size of squad available to those clubs."

Splendid rhetoric, but somewhere within that little lot McMenemy hides a clever point. Quietly, unobtrusively, yet very effectively, he has added some players to his squad and now has greater strength in reserve.

Mark Dennis arrived from Birmingham City and Alan Curtis came from Swansea.

Another subtle change in Southampton this season, under McMenemy's careful supervision, has been the tightening of a defence which always seemed pretty charitable. After 22 League matches, Saints had the best defensive record in Division One, matched only by Liverpool.

Southampton's traditional goalscoring strength has been sacrificed to a certain extent. The team scored only 26 goals in those first 22 games. But defensive weakness undermines every title challenge and McMenemy has been quick to solve the problem.



Skipper Steve Williams (above, left), 'keeper Peter Shilton (above) and veteran Nick Holmes (below) have all played their part in Saints' success this season.



'Saints saved my life'

MARK DENNIS

Mark Dennis' career has taken on a new lease of life since he moved to Southampton.

Dennis described the torment of life at Birmingham under manager Ron Saunders in a *Shoot* interview. Saunders had stopped talking to Dennis and it was a relief when a transfer to Southampton was arranged in November.

Dennis says: "It's saved my life coming here. It's so different to playing at Birmingham."

"I suppose the biggest difference is that the manager Lawrie McMenemy has got a lot more respect for the players, and consequently they've got a lot more for him. The whole atmosphere is different."

'Pressure'

"Mr McMenemy hasn't put me under any pressure, either. He's just told me to go out and play my game."

McMenemy has got a reputation for being able to handle so-called difficult players. And his methods already seem to be working on Dennis, who admits that he has a poor disciplinary record.

He says: "I don't think I have anything to prove on the park. I've always been able to go out and show people that I can do the business. But I know I've needed to improve disciplinary wise."

"I think I am winning there, too."



In situations where I would have retaliated in the past, I'm now learning to walk away. It's not worth getting into trouble."

"Of course, when you've a reputation for that sort of thing, other players try to get you going. People still try to wind me up but I just laugh at them now."

Dennis is certainly enjoying the standard of play around him after the struggles at Birmingham. He says: "Peter Shilton is out of this world in goal and Steve Williams in midfield has been showing some unbelievable form."

"When you're at other clubs, you tend not to think too much about players like Nick Holmes, who has been at the club for about 12 years. But now that I've played alongside him I realise what an asset someone like that is."

"He never stops talking and giving you the benefit of his experience during a game."

"Overall, it's been a fantastic move for me and it couldn't have worked out better."

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LESS TO BOTHER
US... FLYING
SAUCERS
APPROACHING

IGNORE
THEM, THEY CAN'T
HURT US... LOOK
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FIGHTER...
IT'S FAST...

...BUT NOT
FAST ENOUGH...

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Karl-Heinz and Michael Rummenigge . . .

BAYERN'S BRILLIANT BROTHERS!

MICHAEL Rummenigge, the most exciting young striker in West German football, should have known that his fortunes were about to change the day Udo Lattek succeeded Pal Csernai as manager of Bayern Munich.

It was the astute Lattek who launched Michael's better-known brother Karl-Heinz on the road to greatness back in 1974 during his first spell with the famous Bavarian club.

And Lattek wasted no time promoting the blossoming Michael to the senior side back in May last year. That was against Schalke 04 and Bayern lost 1-0. But Karl-Heinz was quick to remind his disappointed young brother that he, too, made a losing debut . . . 6-0 to Offenbach!

But then it seems that the more you look at these gifted brothers, the more you see the similarities.

Both are blond, upright in stance, skilful, powerful and exude a confidence that to outsiders often smacks of arrogance.

Lattek explains: "They are quality footballers in every sense of the word and believe they are going to succeed. It is a good thing, be-

cause it rubs off on the players around them.

"Michael has a tough job living and playing in the shadow of such a famous brother. But he has a strong character, and if anything, I believe he is more advanced now at 19 than Karl-Heinz was at the same age."

Karl-Heinz says: "I keep an eye on him and make sure that he does not get so confident that he becomes less sharp. But that job is easy with my brother. He just wants to score goals."

"I have reminded him that when the goals dry up, as they do for every striker, he must keep playing the same way, believing in himself."

Michael says: "I found it difficult to talk to Csernai. He and Udo Lattek are worlds apart. With Lattek I can talk about private matters, anything at all that is worrying me."

"And it's thanks to him that my career has taken off so quickly. Now it is up to me to justify his faith in me."

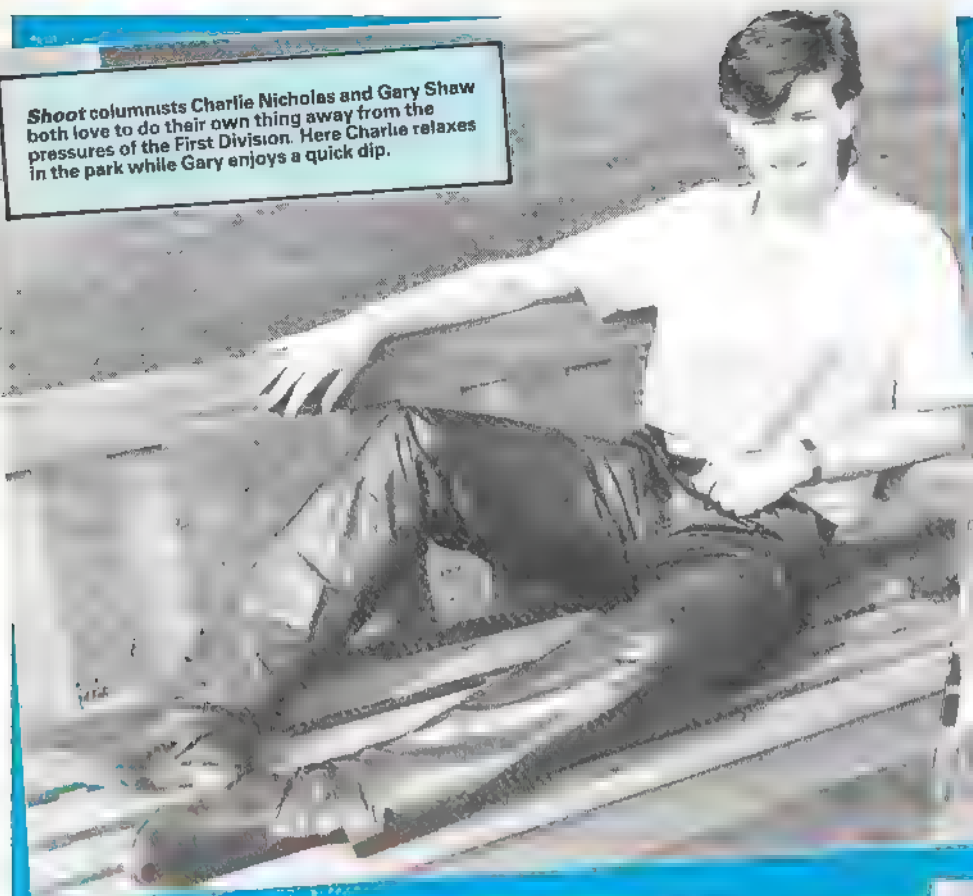
Michael and the grounded Karl-Heinz battle it out against Spurs during Bayern's recent UEFA Cup defeat.



West Ham's Steve Whitton had a field day when his former Coventry City team-mates arrived at Upton Park for a First Division game this season. After trailing 2-0, Steve, seen powering his way past Brian Roberts, helped The Hammers to a comprehensive 5-2 win. The ex-Sky Blue scored two goals while striker Dave Swindlehurst grabbed the headlines with a hat-trick.



Shoot columnists Charlie Nicholas and Gary Shaw both love to do their own thing away from the pressures of the First Division. Here Charlie relaxes in the park while Gary enjoys a quick dip.



STARS THAT MAKE THE GIRLS SCREAM



Ipswich star Russell Osman lives up to his bachelor boy image with gymnast and pin-up Suzanne Dando. But his England team-mate Glenn Hoddle is a happily married man, so he's keeping his eyes firmly on the menu!



FOOTBALL FUNNIES



"I see the new boss is making changes. I'm down on the wing and you're playing at centre-half."



"Still having problems raising the players' wages?"

Luton's Paul Walsh spells a warning to his brilliant new team-mate:

'Stand up to the tough guys'

IF Luton Town fans thought the club had unearthed a little gem when Paul Walsh arrived at Kenilworth Road, they ought to heed the advice of Walsh himself about the club's latest discovery.

A Nigerian youngster who came to Britain at the age of 11 has stunned the Kenilworth Road club with some of his magnificent football skills.

So much so that the newcomers' front-line colleague Walsh admits: "He could have a terrific future in the game."

"At 24, he isn't exactly a kid, but with his talent, he ought to become a great player."

The young man at the centre of all the attention is Emeka Nwajobi, discovered playing non-League football in the West Country and then snapped up from Dulwich Hamlet.

The fee? Small to begin with, but if the talented African makes it to the top and becomes a regular player in Luton's first team, Dulwich Hamlet stand to receive £20,000.

'Natural'

Walsh says of this young man who made a startling League debut for Luton against Nottingham Forest on January 2: "He has such natural ability. After his first few touches on the ball it was obvious he is a quality performer."

"His dribbling can be devastating and he's strong, too. Not a guy who can be easily knocked off the ball."

But Walsh counsels caution in estimating the Nigerian's chances of making it to the very top. "It's going to be as hard a road for him as it is for anyone," he says.

"No one plays at First Division level without an awful lot of hard work and practice."

"But with his natural flair and talent, and a manager like David Pleat, Emeka has a great chance."

"He has certainly come to the right club if he wants to succeed and see his attacking football survive."

Forest, wise old campaigners both at home and in Europe, were stunned by Nwajobi's skills. That New Year match ended in a 3-2 win for Brian Clough's men, but only after Walsh and Nwajobi had scored Luton's goals.

The Nigerian made Walsh's goal that day and was again among the

goals in Luton's F.A. Cup Third Round tie against Watford, scoring his side's opener in a 2-2 draw.

Talk of another Stanley Matthews because of the youngster's magical dribbling skills is probably wildly premature. The trouble is, as Walsh warns, his new colleague has to adapt quickly to the hard, physical demands of the First Division.

"Whatever your skills, being able to look after yourself is an important part of every player's game," says Walsh.

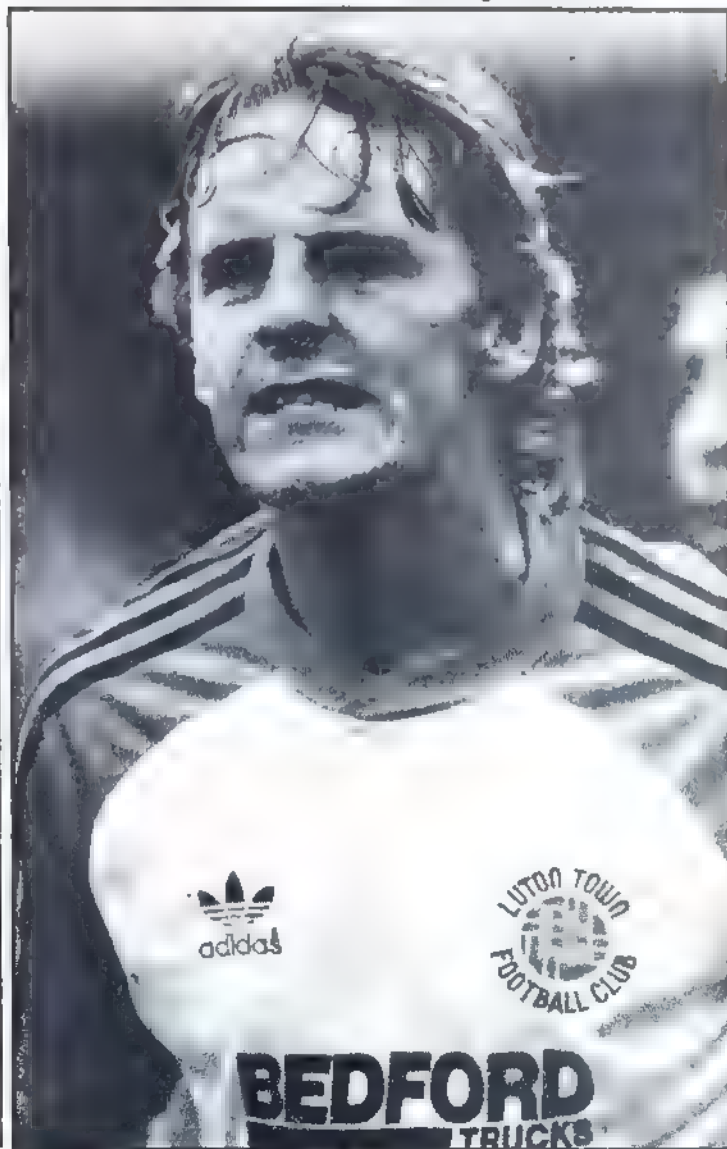
"But if he can handle the physical side of the First Division, his natural ability alone will assure him of a great chance of

succeeding."

Few players have the natural flair of Nwajobi. Nor do they have the intelligence to go with it. He completed his studies in pharmacy before trying his luck at football, because, as he puts it: "My father demanded I do so."

Those studies have now assured a worthwhile future career, but also denied Nwajobi the important years of learning football as an apprentice. It could hamper his progress — but the fairy story could equally work out.

If it does, Luton's shrewd manager David Pleat will have plucked yet another gem from the footballing wilderness.



Goal

It hits every striker at some time or other. When for match after match he fails to get his name on the scoresheet. The most recent, Charlie Nicholas, and several past sufferers, reveal how they survived the ordeal...

STAR WRITER

CHARLIE NICHOLAS

'Helped by a call from Kenny Dalglish

I'm keeping my fingers well and truly crossed that my recent spell of five goals in five games has finally put an end to one of the most frustrating periods of my career.

Until our Boxing Day game at Tottenham, I had managed only three goals in my first four months with Arsenal and the cynics were beginning to suggest my £750,000 transfer fee was a waste of money.

But a couple at White Hart Lane, followed by further goals against Birmingham, Southampton and Middlesbrough, has helped to restore my confidence and ease the pressure.

After scoring 50 times for Celtic last season, it was only natural that Arsenal fans expected a hatful of goals from me in my first season down in England. Personally, I knew I wouldn't score anywhere near as many goals again, but neither did I expect to make such a poor start to my new career.

Failure

It would be easy to say that I never worried about my failure in front of goal, but it wouldn't be true. Every time I picked up a newspaper or switched on the TV I was being reminded how long I'd gone without a goal. Obviously I felt the pressure.

But the club were marvellous about it. Nobody had a go at me for not scoring enough. They just told me to keep doing things I'd been doing when the goals were going in for Celtic and everything would eventually work out.

I never lost faith in my ability and never reached the stage where I despaired of ever scoring again. I knew things would come good eventually.

Mind you, I have to admit that I had some very valuable outside assistance to get through my goalless run.

So I'd like to say a big thank you to the maestro himself — a certain Mr Kenny Dalglish.

Just before Christmas I received a phone call from Kenny, my Scottish international team-mate who is still the best player in the business as far as I'm concerned.

He'd just called for a chat and to give me some advice on how to get back on the goalscoring trail.

Like everyone at Arsenal, Kenny emphasised how important it was for me to keep plugging away and everything would work out right. He also revealed that he once went 23 games without a goal for Liverpool, so my own run of 16 League games wasn't such a disaster after all.

As you can imagine, that was a terrific boost. A vote of confidence from the deadliest striker in Britain was just what I needed at that time.

Perhaps that phone call from Kenny was one of the reasons for my sudden return to form in our 4-2 win at Spurs. Or maybe it was due to my new role in the team.

Instead of playing as one of the strikers alongside Tony Woodcock, I'm now playing further back, with Raphael Meade up front.

Now I play wherever I feel like. I'm not a part of the midfield and I have no obligations to do a specific job. I just go where the fancy takes me, and so far it seems to be working.



Charlie Nicholas can't believe it as Middlesbrough celebrate their F.A. Cup winner

It was Don Howe's idea to pull me back a little and it's strange that now people don't rely on me so much to score. I've started to find the back of the net once again.

However, I must admit that I would rather be back up front. I believe my best position is as an out and out striker, and if the opportunity presents itself I would welcome a move back into the firing line.

But as long as my new role is bringing the right results, then obviously I'm happy to accept what is best for the rest of the team.

The new style certainly seems to have brought out the best in our young midfield star Paul Davis, who is playing out of his skin at the moment.

So is Raphael, who also scored twice in that derby game at Spurs.

Having already scored at White Hart Lane in our Milk Cup win in November, that Boxing Day double really was a welcome bonus for me.

I'd hoped that Milk Cup goal was going to be the end of my barren spell, but things didn't quite work out that way. So I was slightly apprehensive that another long goalless spell would follow my Christmas success.

But I needn't have worried, because in our very next game I scored my first Highbury goal in a 1-1 draw with Birmingham.

Okay, so it was a penalty, but they still have to be scored. As soon as it was awarded, I knew it was the perfect opportunity to break my Highbury duck. And even before I'd taken the spot-kick, I somehow knew it was going to be a goal.

Mind you, scoring goals means very little to me if we still don't win. I can assure you that I gained very little satisfaction from my goal in our 3-2 F.A. Cup defeat at Middlesbrough.

Going out of the Cup in the Third Round was a terrible blow to everyone at Arsenal, so now it's essential that we start to win more League games in order to qualify for a UEFA Cup place.

Notts County come to Highbury this Saturday. Three points for Arsenal is my first priority. Goals for Charlie Nicholas come secondary to that.

Charlie Nicholas

'A laugh with the lads' — Garry Birtles

CHARLIE isn't alone in hitting that dreaded spell when the net is harder to find than the proverbial needle in a haystack. Nottingham Forest striker Garry Birtles shared the experience.

The England international, now in his second stint at the City Ground, had an unhappy time when he joined Manchester United for a massive £1.2m in October, 1980.

Prior to the move, he had cracked 32 goals in 87 League matches, but had to wait a whole year before getting on United's First Division scoresheet.

He says: "The worst thing was that I could get things right in training but not in the games. I remember we had a practice match one day in which my team



scored five goals — I notched four of them. But that type of form never showed through at the crunch.

"The United players and fans were tremendous. Lou Macari and Gordon McQueen cracked jokes at my expense but being able to enjoy a laugh with the lads was a key factor in getting me through that period.

"The supporters were also terrific. It would have been very easy for them to have become disillusioned with me but they never did. They didn't abuse me and I received no nasty letters. I'll always be grateful for that."

starvation!



Success at last! Garry Birtles is congratulated after finally scoring his first goal for Manchester United (left).

Kop King Kenny Dalglish, arguably Britain's best striker, has been instrumental in Liverpool's success in recent years. But even he went through a bad spell at the start of last season, when he failed to score in the Reds' opening 11 matches.

He recalls: "It didn't bother me too much. What was important was that we were top of the League. Some people mistakenly gauge my contribution by the number of goals that I score, but don't forget I create quite a few as well."

The first Liverpool player to confirm that would be Ian Rush, who has benefited enormously from Dalglish's cunning work.

The Welsh striker, one of the most feared men in Europe, has proved a spectacular success since joining the club from Chester but he did not have the happiest of goalscoring starts at Anfield.

In his first season, 1980-81, he made seven League appearances without scoring. Since then his



Steve Archibald nets Spurs' winner against Forest at the start of the tremendous recent scoring run (above).

'I got greedy' — Steve Archibald

"Then I go out and have a stinker but score and the next thing I find I'm being praised. I guess it is something that I must accept, but if I ever thought scoring was my sole duty, and started to get selfish, I know my game would suffer.

One man who would certainly disagree with that view is Steve



'Player power' — Ian Rush

scoring feats seem as certain as midnight follows day, but he remains refreshingly modest about his skill as a marksman.

"I put my success down to the other players around me," he says. "They set up so many opportunities that I cannot fail to get among the goals."

"But I can have a good game without scoring — a fact which is often appreciated by other players but not by the supporters and the media.

Archibald, Tottenham's Scottish international striker.

He had a poor spell at the start of last season but this time around he has been in cracking form. His secret? Selfishness.

He explains: "Before this season I used to create chances for other people by making dummy runs and taking defenders out of position. Sometimes I forgot my own goalscoring role."

"That's changed this season. Whenever I get the ball now, I just think goals, goals, goals! I've got this greedy feeling now and it's certainly paying off."

"After coming back into the side this season I scored 16 in 21 games before illness forced me back on the sidelines around Christmas."



'A new challenge' — Gordon Davies

Gordon Davies, Fulham's Welsh forward, intends to follow Archibald's lead — and you cannot really blame him.

He wants to get away from Craven Cottage but his form recently has not helped him. He was dropped by manager Malcolm Macdonald in December after scoring only one League goal in two months.

"I need a new challenge," he says. "A change of club would do me a power of good."

"It's been frustrating but it hasn't got to me because I know I will score goals. I haven't been too relaxed on the field and I'm tending to stab at the ball."

"I intend to get a bit greedier in front of goal — It's worked for Archibald and it could work for me."

A striker's confidence may go a little during a barren spell but if they have the guts they will bounce back — just like Charlie Nicholas.

BARREN SPELLS (in League football)

Steve Archibald (Spurs).
Sept 4, 1982 (v. Everton) — Nov 20, 1982 (v. West Ham).

Garry Birtles (Man Utd) (now Nottingham Forest).
Oct 22, 1980 (v. Stoke) — Sept 19, 1981 (v. Swansea).

Ian Rush (Liverpool).
Apr 3, 1981 (v. Stoke, League debut) — Oct 10, 1981 (v. Leeds).

Kenny Dalglish (Liverpool).
May 15, 1982 (v. Spurs) — Oct 30, 1982 (v. Brighton).

Charlie Nicholas (Arsenal).
Aug 29, 1983 (v. Wolves) — Dec 26, 1983 (v. Spurs).

Gordon Davies (Fulham).
Oct 8, 1983 (v. Chelsea) — Dec 31, 1983 (v. Portsmouth).

ASK THE EXPERT

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£2m at Burnley

Is it true a Third Division club now have a couple of one-time £1 million-plus players on their books?

IVAN CRUMP, SHEFFIELD

● Certainly is, Ivan, and the club is Burnley.

Kevin Reeves, who joined them last July, upset Manchester City's bank balance to that extent when he came from Norwich in March, 1980.

And Steve Daley, who joined up with him again at Burnley four months later, cost City another seven-figure packet when he left Wolves in September, 1979.

NO JACKPOT

I'm wondering what's the highest number of draws in the Football League on a single day?

ADAM ISSA, ZAMBIA

● Best I can find, Adam, is 22 on 13th October, 1962.

As you can imagine, no one hit the jackpot on that day!

On 18th September, 1948, nine of the 11 First Division games ended all square — a record for any Division on a single day.

Super Reds

In 1977 I saw Liverpool beat Borussia Mönchengladbach in the European Cup Final in Rome, but can't remember their exact side. Can you help me?

PICA LUGI, ITALY

● With pleasure, Pica, and this is how Liverpool lined-up: Ray Clemence, Phil Neal, Joey Jones, Tommy Smith, Ray Kennedy, Emlyn Hughes, Kevin Keegan, Jimmy Case, Steve Heighway, Ian Callaghan, and Terry McDermott.

The goals in their 3-1 win came from McDermott, Smith and Neal (penalty). Allan Simonsen scored for the West Germans.

SHORT PASSES

● The two goals Bobby Moore scored in his record 108 full internationals for England both came in 1966 — against Poland on 5th January, and against Norway on 29th June.

(MATTHEW NEWMAN, Cambridge)

● When Swindon beat Arsenal 3-1 in the 1969 League Cup Final, their goals came from Don Rogers (two) and Roger Smart; Bobby Gould replying for The Gunners.

(ANDREW CHADFIELD, New Zealand)

● Bobby Charlton made his full England debut, and scored his first international goal, in the 4-0 win over Scotland at Hampden Park on 18th April, 1958.

(PAPSI MWAPPE, Zambia)

fielding Nicky against them.

"Everything worked out perfectly — we won 2-1 and Nicky had a superb afternoon."

Walker and Wallace joined forces again just before the turn of the year when the Ibrox supremo paid out £50,000 plus Kenny Black and Kenny Llyall to Motherwell.

Bobby Williamson is a livewire raider who scored almost 30 goals for Clydebank last season. Wallace believes the hard-working youngster will fire Rangers up the Premier Division, capitalising on the out-field play of Bobby Russell, Robert Prytz and Ian Redford.

Aberdeen manager Alex Ferguson has rarely made a mistake in the transfer market and it looks as

in the second-leg of the Super Cup at Pittodrie in front of a packed house and an audience of millions on world wide television.

"I could hardly take it all in," says 19-year-old Stewart. "It was right out of the blue. I knew nothing at all about it."

"One week I was worrying about fighting relegation with Dundee and a few days later I was in the Aberdeen team that beat the West Germans 2-0 to be crowned Europe's top side. Amazing!"

Without any fuss, Dundee, who owe almost £1/2 million, fixed up former Ayr, St. Johnstone and Aberdeen forward Walker McCall at the start of the season and former manager Donald Mackay en-

'SKINFLINT!'

Celtic manager David Hay has spent miserly but wisely in the transfer market.

DAVID Hay admits he has £1 million to spend in his efforts to drive Celtic to further glory ... but the Parkhead boss is in no rush to get rid of their mountain of money.

He is being termed as soccer's Mr Scrooge because of his reluctance to spend cash on new players, but Hay says: "I will never be held to ransom. I will only pay what I believe the player is worth. I won't get involved in auctions."

'Skinflint' Hay, in fact, has spent a miserly £200,000 in buying three players since he took over as Celtic manager during the close season.

He paid out £100,000 for Coventry striker Jim Melrose, followed this up with £40,000 plus John Buckley for Partick's stylish left-back Brian Whittaker, and spent £60,000 on John Colquhoun from Stirling Albion.

'Strengthen'

More big-buys will follow and Hay stresses: "I'm always looking to strengthen my playing staff, but it's important to buy players who want to play and have the best interests of Celtic."

Across Glasgow, Rangers' new manager Jock Wallace has bought a goalkeeper and a goalscorer — Nicky Walker, from Motherwell and Bobby Williamson, from Clydebank.

Walker and Wallace are becoming a formidable soccer partnership and the Ibrox boss has now signed the 'keeper three times!

"I knew all about the lad when I brought him down to Leicester in my spell there," says Wallace. "When I went to Motherwell I went back for him."

"I signed him before a game against Celtic at Fir Park just after the turn of last year."

"Earlier in the season we had lost 7-0 against the Parkhead side at home, but I didn't hesitate in

though he has come up with another winner in young right-back Stewart McKimmie from Dundee.

He cost £90,000 in a shock swoop and, equally surprising, only a week or so after the deal, McKimmie was playing against the European Champions SV Hamburg

Jim Melrose has already proved a bargain buy for Celtic this season.



thuses: "He must have been one of football's best buys."

"He's a great goalscorer and a hard worker. He is an ideal man to lead your attack. I've left the club, now, but I wish Walker and every-one at Dens Park the best of luck."

Another piece of inspired transfer market wheeling-and-dealing from Mackay was his player-swap deal to take midfielder Lex Richardson to Dundee with striker Eric Sinclair going to St Mirren.

Richardson, once a target for Celtic, is one of the most committed players in the Premier Division and is teaming up magnificently with captain Cammy Fraser. Sadly, Sinclair hardly played a first team game for The Saints and was allowed to go to Airdrie for a small fee after only a month at Love Street.

One veteran striker enjoying a new lease of life is Jimmy Bone at Hearts. Bone, whose travels include Partick Thistle, Norwich, Sheffield United, Celtic, Arbroath, St Mirren as well as stints in Hong Kong and Canada, says: "I'm really enjoying myself at Tyne castle."

"There is a general buzz in the air around Edinburgh and, believe me, there are some of the finest youngsters in the game on Hearts' books."

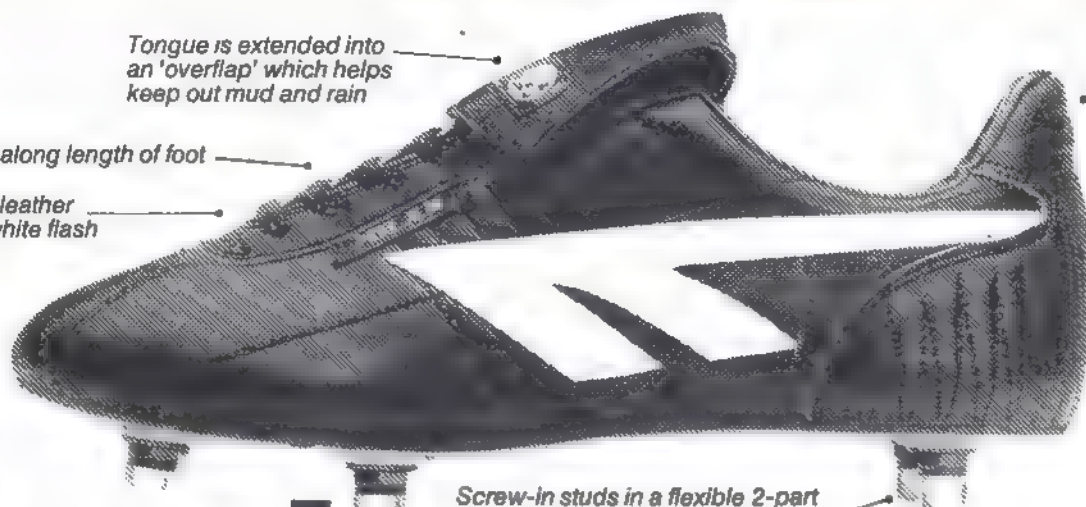
"I thoroughly enjoy playing alongside John Robertson up front. The lad has got everything going for him."

Neil Cooper is back in Scottish football following a three-year spell in England with Barnsley and Grimsby. A bargain £15,000 fee took him to Love Street as new manager Alex Miller's first signing for St. Mirren and he had a debut that will live with him forever.

"I signed just before a game against Celtic at Love Street," says Neil, the former Aberdeen defender who should not be confused with current Pittodrie favourite Neale Cooper.

"Celtic were 2-0 up but by half-time we were 3-2 ahead and eventually won 4-2."

The transfer market hasn't exactly burst to electrifying life and money is obviously in short supply, but there has been some shrewd signings and clubs are benefiting from fresh blood.



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WEST Bromwich Albion full-back **Brandon Batson** has given up the fight to save his playing career — but he is determined that it won't be the end of his working life in soccer.

Batson finally conceded defeat just before Christmas after a 14-month struggle to recover from three separate knee operations.

The 30-year-old former England 'B' international announced his decision to retire from playing.

But immediately he began looking for a new job in coaching or management and says: "I'm

"In Ron Atkinson I found a manager with the same sort of determination, and I think it fired me. I began to be more ambitious, and he brought the best out of me.

"Perhaps at first everything had come a bit too easily for me, and at Highbury I wasn't mature enough to appreciate it.

"Going to Cambridge, and then coming under Ron's guidance, made me see that you have to work to realise your ambitions."

Batson followed Atkinson to The Hawthorns in February, 1978, for a bargain £30,000, and went on to make 172 First Division appearances for Albion.

The highlights of his career

BATSON'S BATTLE

treating this as the start of the next stage of my career, rather than the end of it.

"I've just reached it a bit earlier than I expected."

It's that sort of fighting spirit that inspired the soccer life of Batson, born in Grenada, West Indies.

He began as an apprentice with Arsenal but after only six appearances was given a free transfer and joined Cambridge United. Even then it took the arrival of Ron Atkinson as manager to inspire the start of Batson's climb to be eventually recognised as one of the League's most accomplished full-backs.

were his three games for the England 'B' team. "It was very exciting to think you were on the fringe of a place in your country's team."

The worst moment was defeat in the 1982 F.A. Cup Semi-Final against QPR at Highbury.

"It was devastating to have got so close to every player's dream of a Wembley Final and then to miss out."

Even so, Batson says that was easier to accept than the latest setback. "When you are playing you can always put things right.

"After any defeat there's another game a few days later for you to bounce back and win.



"This time as far as playing is concerned there's no way I can bounce back. But I have done a lot of thinking — I've known for a long time that I was unlikely to get fit enough to play again, and now I have made the decision to quit I'm not going to brood about it.

"I've had a good career, and if I have lost the battle to keep the playing side going, then it is up to me to put that right by finding the chance to have the same sort of success in coaching or management."



BOLD BOBBY PEPS POMPEY

PORTSMOUTH lived in cloud cuckoo land for years — but the days of fairy tale living ended the moment Bobby Campbell was appointed manager at Fratton Park.

Thousands of pounds had been spent by Pompey a few years back in a vain attempt to recapture the glory days. The move failed disastrously with the club crashing into Division Four in 1978.

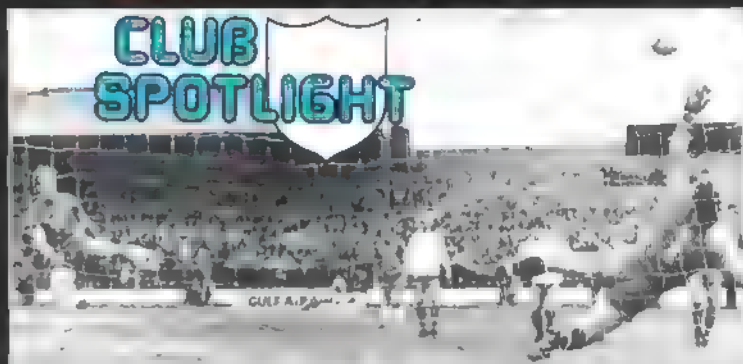
Under Campbell, money has been spent — but wisely and on

quality players.

None of Campbell's signings has had a bigger impact than ex-Coventry striker Mark Hateley, who cost £180,000.

Hateley, son of the famous former goalscorer Tony Hateley, became the Third Division's leading scorer and kept up the goal burst. No wonder Campbell was so pleased with the partnership he developed with former Everton striker Alan Biley, another prolific marksman.

Kevin Dillon cost £200,000 from Birmingham, Neil Webb, the England Youth international, was a £90,000 midfield signing from Reading, Nicky Morgan cost £50,000 from West Ham, where he had failed to make the grade as a regular first team striker, and Richard Money cost almost



Alan Knight makes a spectacular penalty save from Chelsea's Kerry Dixon (above) while at the other end Mark Hateley (right) has been in impressive scoring form.



Twin skippers— Steve Aizlewood and Bobby Doyle



PORTSMOUTH have had a double captaincy this season because of injuries.

Central defender Steve Aizlewood is first choice but injuries have kept him out for several games so midfielder Bobby Doyle has stepped into the breach.

Manager Campbell says: "Aizlewood leads by example; he puts his head in where others would not dream of doing so. But he has been injured so often that he has even had plastic surgery on his eyebrows because of all the knocks."

"Doyle (left) is a similar, head down, inspirational figure and a real winner."

It's Amazing

1 Portsmouth had a unique beginning. Following their birth to a Football Association investigation into alleged illegal payments to players by an amateur public house team called Royal Artillery. They were kicked out of football but came back the following year — 1899 — as plain Portsmouth

2 They joined the Southern League and were unbeaten at home in their first three seasons, winning the Championship in 1901-02. Teams visiting Fratton Park complained that their players were tired out by the traditional pre-match walking tour of the vast docks area and it had to be dropped from the match-day itinerary

3 One of their best-known players of that early era was Irish international goalkeeper Matthew 'Ginger' Reilly who had been a top Gaelic footballer in his native Donybrook. He used to specialise in bouncing the ball to the halfway line, and this hurried the introduction of the law banning

£100,000 from Luton and slotted in at left-back.

But Campbell knows that with so many new faces, he needs time to forge the understanding so essential in a successful side.

He says: "I believe we are on the right track here. You must have faith in what you are doing but, equally, people must be brave around you as well as patient."

Campbell drives his players hard, a fact typified by their promotion last season as Third Division Champions by a clear five points.

Out of 46 League games, just nine were lost and although this time around has been no more than average, Campbell is quietly impressed.

"We have been playing some good stuff and making friends all around the country. But we haven't been winning many points so we still have a lot to do."

"I have spent £600,000 in two years here so that hardly puts us in the big league of spenders when compared to some clubs. But I make sure of one thing — I buy

goalkeepers from handling the ball outside the penalty-area

4 Portsmouth were admitted to the newly formed Third Division in 1920 and sped into the Second Division before winning promotion to the First in remarkable circumstances in 1927. They were locked together with Manchester City on the last day of the season. City kicked off a quarter of an hour earlier in their final game and beat Bradford 8-0. The score was flashed to Fratton Park where Portsmouth were playing Preston. They scored one more goal to clinch a 5-1 victory and promotion by 0.005 of a goal!

5 It was third time lucky for Portsmouth when they won the F.A. Cup in 1939 after finishing runners-up in 1929 and 1934. They scored a shock 4-1 victory over hot favourites Wolves after following a superstitious routine in which winger Fred Worrall always buttoned manager Jack Tinn's spats before every match

6 Pompey had their greatest triumphs in the immediate post-war years when their squad was strengthened by top players who had returned to

quality."

Campbell makes no secret of his desire for more new players, saying: "We need strengthening all over the squad. I want us to have the sort of squad clubs like Liverpool and Manchester United enjoy. In other words, where you can bring in a quality player if another is out injured."

Portsmouth with the Royal Navy fleet in the ten years following the Second World War they won the League title in successive years — 1948-49 and 1949-50 — and finished in the top ten in all but four seasons

7 Their tumble down into the Fourth Division made them — along with Huddersfield — the only club to have won the League Championship and to have played in all four Divisions

8 Portsmouth played Newcastle on 22 February 1956, in an historic First Division match at Fratton Park. It was the first League game ever played under floodlights. Newcastle won 2-0

9 Jimmy Dickinson's 764 League appearances for Portsmouth between 1946 and 1965 was a one-club record until John Trollope overtook it with 770 League games for Swindon

10 Jack Froggatt, left-winger in Pompey's Championship-winning teams, was one of the most versatile footballers ever to play for England. He was capped at outside-left and as a centre-half



PORTSMOUTH

LAST SEASON'S RECORD

LEAGUE: PL46 W27 D10 L9 F74 A41 Pts91 Pos 1st

F.A. CUP: Hereford (h) 4-1 (Biley 2, Rafferty 2), Aldershot (h) 1-3 (Webb)

MILK CUP: Crystal Palace (a) 0-2, Crystal Palace (h) 1-1 (Biley)

HONOURS

First Division Champions: 1948-49, 1949-50. Third Division (South) Champions: 1923-24. Third Division Champions: 1961-62, 1982-83. F.A. Cup winners: 1938-39.



MOUTH

Most League goals: Peter Harris — 194 (1946-60)
Most League appearances: Jimmy Dickinson — 764 (1946-65)
Record Transfer Fee Paid: £200,000 to Birmingham for Kevin Dillon in March, 1983.
Record Transfer Fee Received: £130,000 from Brighton for Steve Foster in June, 1979



THE next 12 months will be vitally important to Ipswich according to striker Eric Gates. During 1984, his benefit year, he reckons the club will face a make or break period.

He views the weeks between now and May as being especially critical for the Portman Road outfit and says: "Soon we'll either be pushing toward the top or battling against relegation. The club is in a transitional stage and we all have to pull our weight."

On the matter of pulling his own weight, Gates reflects: "I consider I've done reasonably well so far this season, but won't be content until I've done more to help the youngsters."

"When you've lost outstanding players, as we have, I believe it's up to the more experienced men in the side to do all they can to help the young lads who are coming on."

It was the departure of several top names from Ipswich which contributed to Gates himself experiencing a spell of discontent.

DANGER A-HEAD warns Gates

And he says: "I witnessed the break-up of a great side, and at the time it didn't seem that very much was being done to get replacements."

"Frans Thijssen, Arnold Muhren, Mick Mills and Alan Brazil all left, making the task of filling their

places terribly difficult.

"I was fed-up, wondering if enough people cared about the club — but the feeling passed. Ipswich haven't the cash to invest in new players, and as I love this part of the world, I'm prepared to do battle for the club."

As his scoring contribution to his team, Eric has set himself a goals'

target. He says: "In recent seasons my totals have been 12, 13, 14 and 15 goals, but due to a seven-month injury absence last term, I only scored twice. This season, I won't be disappointed if I can hit 14."

"Due to the loss of Alan Brazil, I've been playing up front alongside Paul Mariner, which I don't mind, although my favourite position is midfield."

Born in the North-East, Gates has a warm spot for Sunderland, but this didn't prevent him starring against them for Ipswich in December. He scored a brilliant goal which earned a draw, and might have added another couple had he not been the victim of the professional foul on two occasions.

Surprisingly, though, Eric can sympathise with defenders in such situations.

"It can be annoying to be pulled down on the edge of the box, but putting myself in the position of the defender at Roker, I would have been tempted to do the same. If anything, I'm just as pleased that these days the referees are not as strict as they



Gates battles it out with Liverpool defender Mark Lawrenson.



Alan Brazil was one of four Ipswich stars to leave Portman Road last year.



Victory in the 1981 UEFA Cup brought in valuable revenue for Ipswich.

were in observing the rule."

With money tight at Portman Road, Gates would like to see Ipswich get into Europe — but he confesses this is only for economic reasons and not because he relishes playing on the Continent.

"Playing in the European competitions brings in the cash which clubs are short of today. Yet I don't enjoy taking part in them, and from a football point of view there is nothing they can teach us."

"In recent years, British teams have consistently won trophies on the Continent, and Ipswich were one of them when we lifted the UEFA Cup in 1981."

"And in 1980, '81 and '82, Ipswich were twice runners up, and once third, in the First Division Championship. We had a class side and I don't think we'd anything to learn from the Continentals."

If Gates has a regret, it is that he feels Ipswich haven't received sufficient credit for the title-chasing teams they have produced.

He says: "People seem to forget how good we were. But I'm hoping we are building another side that will make them sit up and take notice."



Straight shooting from JIMMY GREAVES

Write exclusively to: Jimmy Greaves, SHOOT, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS. £10 for Star Letter, £4 others published. Overseas readers receive SHOOT T-shirts (please state size medium or large). When writing please mention two features you liked best in the latest issue.

This week's Star Letter and £10 winner comes from Colin Thom of Eilerslie High Craigmores, Rothesay in Bute. He writes:

Calamity Clemence



You are always quick to criticise Scottish goalkeepers, but what about the performance of England international Ray Clemence during Tottenham's 4-2 defeat at Manchester United? And Spurs' dreadful defensive record since then hardly suggests he's the best 'keeper in the world.



Ray is now 35, so a rough patch for the first time in his career was long overdue. Actually, I've made him an honorary Scotsman until he recaptures his form! But seriously, you could blame him for possibly all four United goals, but what about the other ten he saved? He has had absolutely no help from his defence, who are all over the place at the moment. When you reach your middle 30's, you need a lot of help from team-mates if you are to maintain top form. Ray has been giving invaluable assistance to others for the last 15 years, so he must now feel entitled to a little cover from others. He hasn't had that, so blame the Spurs defence, not Ray. Tottenham have just given him a new three-year contract, so he can't be that bad.



Garry glitters

Don't you think it's time that Garry Birtles was given another chance by England? He's currently playing as well as he's ever done, and he can't do any worse than England's recent strikers.

SIMON KNOBBS,
FORSBROOK, STAFFS.



In the coming months, Bobby Robson is going to be inundated with suggestions for players for England. The name of Garry Birtles (left) is one of those names which will crop up. He's as good as any of the others, so why not give him a chance? I know that when he was capped back in 1980, Cloughie told Ron Greenwood not to pick him because he had gone off the boil. Greenwood ignored the advice and Birtles suffered as a result.

No comment

Why can't we have televised soccer without the inane comments of so-called experts like John Motson, Brian Moore, Jimmy Hill and Barry Davies?

JIMMY ROBINSON,
MIDDLESBROUGH



At least you didn't include the name of a certain Jimmy Greaves! I'm sure I also upset some viewers with my drivel, but the commentators provide a service which the great majority of the public enjoy.

Welsh exit

I'm glad that Wales have failed to reach the European Championship Finals. Mike England was quick to have a go at England when they went out. Now I bet he wishes he'd kept his big mouth shut.

JONATHAN HARPER,
SWINDON, WILTS.



I simply cannot understand your twisted logic. I think it's terrible that there won't be a single British representative in France this summer. I suppose the Welsh were unlucky to go out, but they've only got themselves to blame. They had enough chances to have buried Yugoslavia at Cardiff but let them off the hook. England and Scotland were even worse. The only one of the four Home Nations I feel any real sympathy for are the Northern Irish, who were unfortunate to miss out on a trip to France.

Wales went out of the European Championship as a result of failing to win at home against Yugoslavia.

Batson's blues

I was very sad to read that Brendon Batson has been forced to retire through injury. Not so long ago he was the best right-back in the country. He should have won much more than just three England 'B' team caps.

JERRY PANNU,
SUTTON COLDFIELD.



I agree wholeheartedly. Three seasons ago, WBA had the best full-backs in the country in Brendon and Derek Statham. I never understood why they didn't receive the call-up by England. Brendon has been an excellent full-back for many years and it's a tragedy that his career has been cut short by injury. He should have at least one England cap to cherish.



Go Howe!

I don't know how Don Howe can live with his conscience. He should have been the one sacked by Arsenal, not Terry Neill. Instead, it looks as if Howe will finish up with Terry's job of Arsenal manager.

TINA CLARKE,
KELLS, CO. MEATH.



I think a lot of people feel that Terry and Don had such a close relationship that Don should have accepted equal responsibility for Arsenal's performances, particularly as he was the one in charge of coaching. I must admit that I was surprised he wasn't also given the push. As to whether he gets the manager's job on a permanent basis, we'll just have to wait and see.



Boring TV

QPR manager Terry Venables receives far too much praise in the media. The offside tactics employed by his team both home and away make Rangers the most tedious and negative side in the First Division.

MICHAEL REED,
WELLING, KENT.



I must admit that I've never liked the offside trap. It's very annoying to play against and even worse to watch. I often think the team which relies on the offside trap is admitting a weakness because they can't come up with anything better to beat the opposition. But having said all that, I still think Terry is a smashing boss. He's done remarkably well and you just have to look at all he's achieved to see why he's so highly rated.

Hatchet-man

Although he's a player of undoubted quality, Liverpool skipper Graeme Souness gets involved in far too many unsavoury incidents. Why does such a fine footballer need to rely on strong-arm tactics?

D. MILLER,
HIGH GREEN, SHEFFIELD.



I'm not trying to be funny, but I believe the fact that he's a Scotsman may have something to do with it. Dave Mackay, Billy Bremner and many others I could name were all in the same mould. Souness is a great player. He's aggressive and he gets involved, and that's what makes him such an asset. If he tried to calm down, he wouldn't be half as effective for Liverpool or Scotland. Maybe he does poke his nose into other people's disputes at times, but that's what makes him tick.

Shoot! / BRAUN

FAN OF THE WEEK

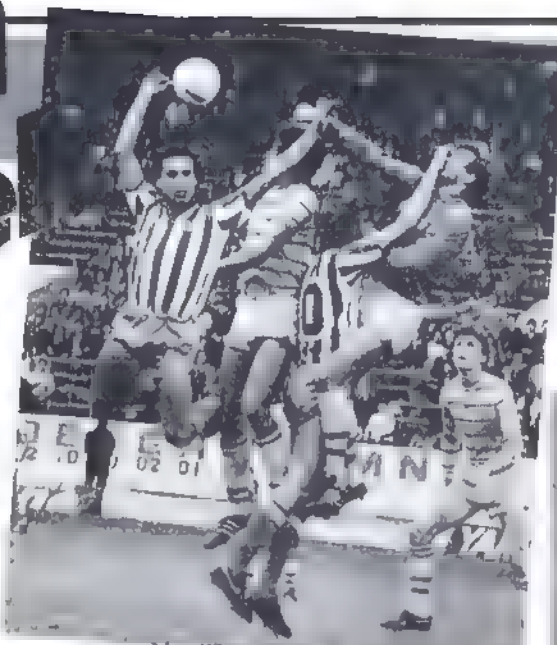


It's amazing the mileage that our Fans of the Week travel to follow their favourite clubs.

And 20-year-old Tommie Collins from Porthmadog, Gwynedd, North Wales, is no exception.

Nominated by his mum, Miriam, Tommie catches the 7 a.m. train from Bangor to watch Chelsea play in London.

"He has to hitch-hike from home



Tommie Collins was one of thousands of Chelsea fans who made the long trip up to Hillsborough to see the promotion clash with Sheffield Wednesday.

DO you know a super fan who deserves to be rewarded for his or her loyalty to football? Then send your nomination to Shoot! Braun Fan of the Year, Shoot! Magazine, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS, enclosing his or her photograph and shoe size.

Chelsea on the dole

to the station, which is 30 miles away," says Miriam.

"He spends all his money on supporting the Stamford Bridge club and as Tommie is one of the millions of unemployed, he has to keep a careful eye on his financial situation.

"Invariably I help him

out, but by and large he manages to cope very well.

"Tommie has travelled all over Britain to support Chelsea. He has been to such places as Carlisle, where he didn't arrive home until the next day, Oldham and Sheffield Wednesday.

"But as long as he has seen his beloved Chelsea in action, he doesn't mind what time he arrives back in North Wales.

"He first went alone to London when he was 14, although he has been a big fan of Chelsea's since the age of ten.

"When he got engaged last August, he even proposed to his girlfriend on the Stamford Bridge terraces and celebrated by watching Chelsea thrash Derby County 5-0!"

With promotion looking a distinct possibility and in our Fan of the Week Final, Tommie could have a double celebration at the end of the season — First Division football and a trip to Paris!

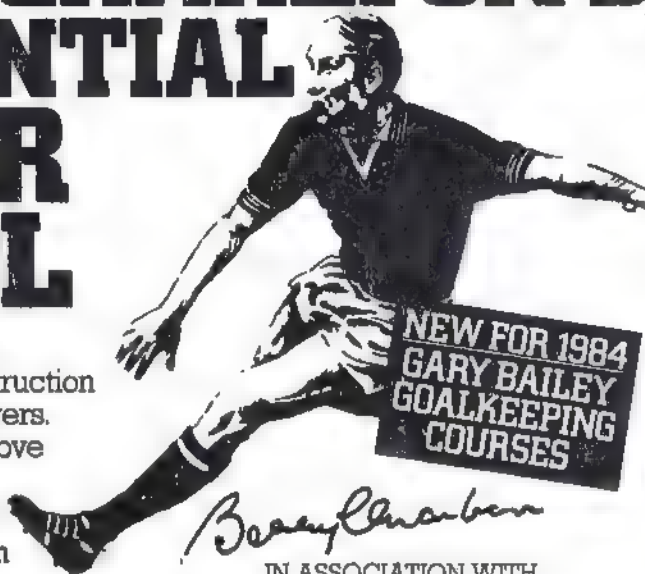
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John McClelland

I WAS having lunch with a friend the other day and people in the restaurant must have wondered if I had possibly overdone my festive celebrations.

It wasn't too long after New Year and, honestly, I could hardly lift my knife and fork!

But, before you jump to the wrong impression, this Irishman hadn't had too much Scotch. Honestly. Quite simply, I had just finished a training session under Jock Wallace at Ibrox... and I was absolutely shattered.

I had heard all about how hard a taskmaster Jock Wallace was and I can tell you those stories are not over-exaggerated. My limbs have been absolutely numb some days after hectic training sessions.

Remember the World Cup Finals in Spain in 1982? Can you recall that marvellous match when Northern Ireland faced the hosts

Jock Wallace outlines his plans during one of the infamous training sessions which leave every one of the Rangers players exhausted.



penalty box.

Nicky Walker has joined from Motherwell and he has displaced Peter McCloy in the Ibrox goal. The long-limbed No. 1 made his debut last month at Easter Road when we beat Hibs 2-0.

If that debut is an indication of how his Ibrox career will go, then I'm certain Rangers fans will be delighted for years to come.

On Saturday (Jan 21) we take on St. Johnstone at Ibrox and things have changed fairly dramatically since we first met them in Glasgow earlier in the season.

We eventually won 6-3 in a nine-goal sizzler and, in our second meeting, a brilliant goal from Ian Redford gave us a 1-0 triumph — Jock Wallace's first victory since his return as Rangers boss.

Here's hoping we complete the hat-trick.

THE BOSS IS A KILLER

and won 1-0?

We were under fierce pressure that night and I didn't think I'd ever have to work so hard again. But I've left the training field at Ibrox even more exhausted!

Mr Wallace always tries to instil good habits in his players. Let's face it, when you do something right in training every day you're unlikely to be sloppy when it comes to the real thing on a Saturday.

I didn't realise there was so much scope for more fitness in my own game, but Mr Wallace is driving me towards the peak of my condition and there will be no complaints from yours truly if it helps my performance and also aids those of the players around me.

People talk about Jock Wallace just being a fitness fanatic, but that's nonsense. He also knows his football, but he does demand players being in absolute tip-top condition to deliver the goods.

I've learned a thing or two under our new gaffer and it's no surprise to me that our results have perked up considerably since he took over. He has no secret formula for success... he simply demands 100

per cent application and dedication from professional sportsmen.

He's been making changes on and off the field since he took over a couple of months before the turn of the year.

He has brought in Alex Totten as his right-hand man and John Haggart has also joined up in a backroom capacity. Ironically, both Totten and Haggart are former Falkirk managers like Jock Wallace, they have a keen hunger for success and Rangers, I'm sure, are being put on the right lines by getting the foundations absolutely right.

And Mr Wallace has been busy in the transfer market, too. A possible deal with Nottingham Forest's Ian Wallace fell through, but we did get a new striker when Clydebank accepted £100,000 for their prolific marksman Bobby Williamson, a young player who has greatly impressed me with his attitude and sharpness in the



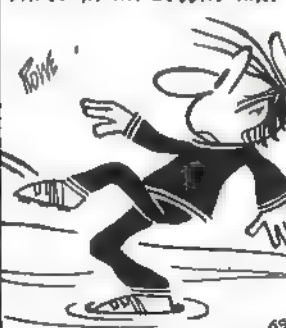
John McClelland

NOBBY

THEY STUCK A SNOWMAN IN GOAL FOR OUR TRAINING MATCH



HE DID VERY WELL UNTIL HE FADED IN THE SECOND-HALF



FADED? HOW COULD A SNOWMAN FADE?



THE SUN CAME OUT AND HE MELTED!



Liverpool MINUS

WHILE star-writer Kenny Dalglish was undergoing an operation for a depressed cheekbone, thousands of Liverpool fans were just plain depressed, haunted by a combination of memory and fear.

The challenge by Manchester United's Kevin Moran that resulted in Dalglish entering hospital, and Liverpool entering the New Year without their

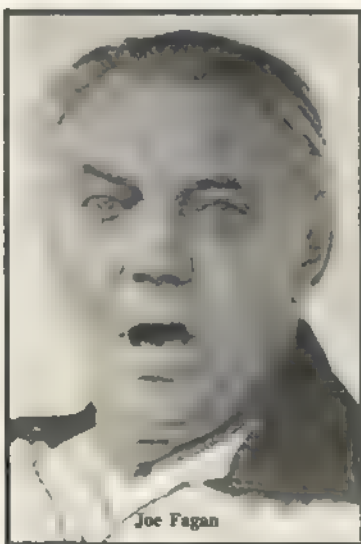
Scottish kingpin, could yet prove the decisive moment in this season's Championship.

Without Dalglish, Liverpool conceded a first-half lead and dropped two home points to a United side hot on their heels.

And those worried fans are suddenly reminded of just how important Dalglish is to their team. Without his contribution, honours will be harder to come by.

Unlike so many star players, Dalglish is quiet, modest and fights shy of headlines and controversy. He always puts the team before the individual and has infuriated many a journalist during his career by brushing aside a personal moment of sheer brilliance by reminding his interviewer that such moments are impossible without the contribution made by all of his team-mates.

But the players at Anfield are quick to do the gifted Glaswegian's public relations work for him. And they, better than anybody else, know how important he is to their cause. So, too, does manager Joe Fagan, who said: "When Kenny isn't playing we do not have the same cunning. It is a blow and a big loss to play without him. Such players are almost impossible to value."



Joe Fagan

From a wandering and instinctive role behind the front strikers, and sometimes as one of those strikers, Dalglish distributes the ball flawlessly, wins it, changes the flow of play, creates openings, drags frightened opponents all over the place and can dynamite a hole of Grand Canyon proportions in the middle of a tight defence by making one run across the box. He also scores goals — consistently and often spectacularly.

Graeme Souness, a captain of biting tenacity and graceful quality, forms a partnership with Dalglish that makes the Liverpool midfield impossible to stifle and wholly unpredictable.

They can unfold a pattern of one-touch passes that will bypass defenders and convert backs-to-the-wall defence into a scoring attack within a matter of



seconds. "Kenny is a quality player, unselfish, hard-working and incredibly consistent. You run out of things to say about the man!" says Souness.

Souness will miss Dalglish! Ian Rush, the most consistent scorer in the First Division, has become a more complete player because of playing in unison with Dalglish. Rush is a natural finisher in his own right, but he would be the first to admit that Dalglish has laid on a hatful of his chances and drawn defenders to him in order to clear Rush's path to goal.

Rush will miss Dalglish!

ANFIELD BREAKTHROUGH

For Dalglish it was easy. But other established stars found it hard going.

LIFE at the top with Liverpool is the sort of career players dream about but realising that dream can be difficult, because the competition for places at Anfield is relentless.

Among present Liverpool players struggling to establish themselves are Craig Johnston, David Hodgson and Mike Robinson, and they are not unique in this respect. There are others in modern times who have fought hard for the right to wear the coveted red shirt.

Frank McGarvey returned to Scotland after failing to make the grade at Anfield. His move over the border was obviously the wrong one for him, but two North-East born players, Ray Kennedy and Alan Kennedy, were more fortunate.

Ray was a proven goalscorer with Arsenal when Bill Shankly

took him to Liverpool. But Ray had weight problems at Anfield and his best days seemed behind him.

Then Shankly's successor, Bob Paisley, moved Ray into midfield, and the rest is history. Medals, trophies and international caps flowed the way of the ex-Arsenal man, who became a key player in the Liverpool line-up.

Alan Kennedy, a current member of the Anfield defence and still hoping to play for England, had trouble establishing himself with Liverpool following his transfer from Newcastle United in 1978.

Alan's fondness for moving forward wasn't always approved of at Anfield, and he was



encouraged to use the short ball out of defence to build up attacks in the Liverpool tradition.

Says Alan: "I've always liked to go down the flank, maybe because I started out as a winger and that's my style. But I keep the urge in check and don't set off on as many runs as I used to."

Fortunately for Liverpool, it was a spur forward by Kennedy that led to him scoring the winner

against Real Madrid in the 1981 European Cup Final, just one of the important goals this attacking full-back has scored for his club.

Ray Clemence, now with Tottenham, had a spell in the reserves after joining Liverpool from Scunthorpe, and another famous Anfield goalkeeper, Tommy Lawrence, didn't find it easy to carve out a place for himself in the first team.

Dalglish EQUALS?



Ian Rush capitalises on Dalglish's good work to score against Notts County. Liverpool's leading scorer is certain to miss that service while Dalglish is out injured.

What is rarely highlighted is Dalglish's magnificent level of consistency since he joined Liverpool from Celtic in 1977. And when examined closely, this record goes a long way to explaining why worry lines are appearing at Anfield while he is



Neither did Terry McDermott. Born in Liverpool, McDermott was a Bury player when Newcastle manager Joe Harvey stepped in to take him to St James' Park in 1973.

Twenty months later, McDermott was transferred to Liverpool for £175,000 and immediately had problems. "I had a bit of an inferiority complex," says Terry. "I was

out of the side.

This is Dalglish's seventh season at Anfield and, incredibly, five of those have passed without him missing one League match!

He played all 42 games in 1977-78 and Liverpool finished First Division runners-up.

In 1978-79 he played another full-house and scored 21 League goals as Liverpool swept to the Championship.

It was the same again 12 months later, Liverpool Champions and

Dalglish scoring 16 League goals.

In 1981-82 and 1982-83 he collected two more Championship medals without missing a First Division game, an astonishing tribute to his professionalism, especially when you consider the marking he faces every time he dons a red shirt.

But the memory of 1980-81 will surely trouble many fans. Admittedly, Liverpool were at less than their best for most of the season. But when Dalglish was injured and out of the side — he missed eight First Division games — some of the results made headlines on their own.

Sunderland (1-0) and Leicester City (2-1) went to Anfield and won. West Bromwich Albion beat them 2-0 at The Hawthorns and in total Liverpool failed to win five of the games, finishing the season fifth in the table.

Nobody can claim that they would have won the title or finished higher if he *had* played. But there is no arguing with the statistics over his career at Anfield to date.

Ray Clemence, Spurs' former Liverpool goalkeeper, sums up the value of Dalglish when he recalls a crucial period of his Anfield career.

"Kenny carried an injury week after week and never uttered a word about it. Why? Because he knew it would affect the side if he dropped out. He was right! We won the title and even then Kenny shrugged off his contribution with typical modesty."

Liverpool will miss Dalglish!

surrounded by star players, fellows who had really made it, and my normal game was stifled.

"Every time I collected the ball, I couldn't get rid of it fast enough. I was so eager to give it to a team-mate that my own contribution was practically nil, and it was quite a while before I developed confidence and came out of my shell."

McDermott came out of his shell to such good effect that he became a Liverpool matchwinner and star, and is now back at Newcastle as a driving force in The Magpies' promotion bid.

promotion bid.

Craig Johnston, who, like McDermott, went to Liverpool as a midfielder, has been so disappointed in his fight for regular recognition that he put in a request for a transfer.

In recent weeks, however, he has won that much-prized first team place and his recent performances suggest he could become a regular choice. Although his contract expires at the end of the season, Johnston now seems likely to withdraw his request for a move.

David Hodgson, an ex-Middlesbrough colleague of Johnston's, is even more unsettled than Craig, though his contract has more than two years to run.

Hodgson has never managed to claim an extended run in the first team, and has had the experience of being left out of the squad even when Mike Robinson has been absent.

So Johnston and Hodgson, key men in their days at Middlesbrough, are two recent players who have found the going tough at Anfield.

As long as Liverpool are collecting trophies, the competition to be part of the most successful team in England will always be tremendous.

THE amazing success of team-of-the-season Oxford United has helped ease the bitterness Jim Smith feels towards Birmingham.

Smith — known affectionately as 'The Bald Eagle' — moved in at Oxford nearly two years ago after being sacked by the St. Andrews club.

He was replaced by Ron Saunders. But while the success Birmingham were looking for is still eluding them — they are locked in their customary fight against relegation — Oxford have really taken off to make the headlines with Milk Cup victories over Newcastle, Leeds and Manchester United.

It's made them the talk of football and if Smith decided to hurl a two-finger salute in the direction of the Midlands, who could blame him?

"Getting the sack there like that hurt a lot and it took me almost a year to get over it," Smith admits.

"It left a lot of scars, because I don't think I deserved it. But the run we are having at Oxford is helping to heal a lot of them and I hardly give Birmingham a thought now."

"I have to admit that things have

Steve Biggins sinks Manchester United in the Milk Cup Fourth Round.

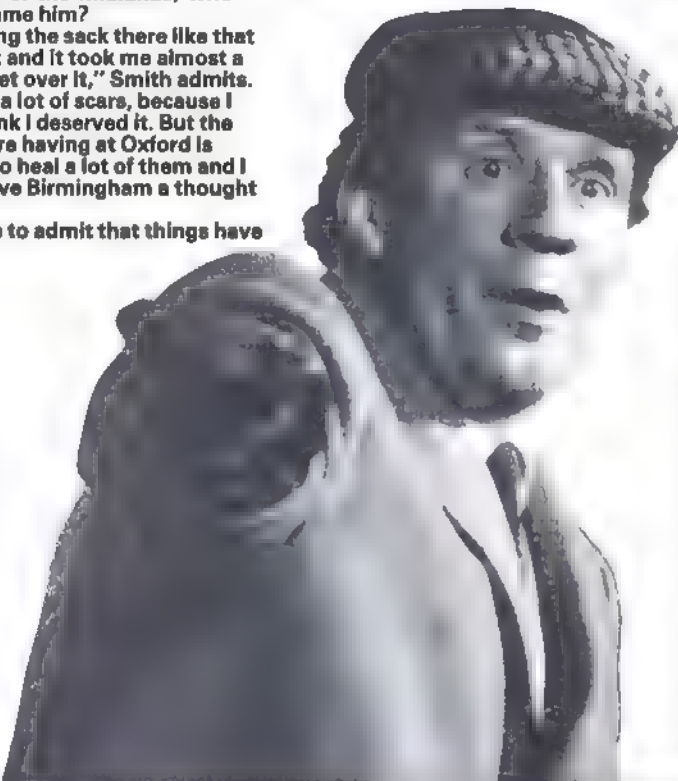
gone far better for us than I ever dreamed they would. It has been a fantastic season and the most pleasing thing of all is that all our great results have been achieved the right way.

"There has been no question of scraping through with a lot of luck. We have done it on merit — having played the best and matched them all the way.

"And I am delighted that the lads have taken it all in their stride, kept their feet on the ground and



Bald Eagle plans revenge



not got carried away.

"They are all pleased with it, of course. But they accept it as the sort of level we are looking for all the time. Success in the Cups is tremendous... but it's promotion we want most of all.

"Chairman Robert Maxwell saved this club from folding when he took control and football would be a better game with more people like him in boardrooms.

"He runs it as a business and the money we have got from our Milk Cup exploits has considerably eased the position here. In fact, we are still selling season tickets... something unheard of before in these parts.

"When I arrived I was told I had no chance of igniting interest in sleepy Oxford, which would never be a football town. Cynics said it would need something very special to wake them up and get them out to watch us.

"Well, we have produced it. And

the fans have responded marvellously."

Oxford's exciting run has highlighted the promise of kids like Kevin Brock and Andy Thomas and, invariably, raised speculation as to whether the club can hold on to them.

"The Cup run has meant I am under no pressure to sell. But all youngsters are ambitious and if we got a worthwhile offer for a player we would obviously consider it — if it was in his interests," said Smith.

The side is laced with other good players, too — all brought in by Smith in a bid to win promotion.

If they do achieve Second Division football next season there's more than an outside chance they will be facing Birmingham.

And the prospect of gaining revenge has not escaped Smith's notice!

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SPOT ON!

AS I forecast back in November, Michel Platini of Juventus and France has been voted European Footballer of the Year.

The gifted midfielder player was doubly delighted to win the title because, quite apart from the personal satisfaction of seeing his tremendous contribution to club and country rewarded, Platini becomes the first French player to win the award since Raymond Kopa... 25 years ago.

And since it is *France Football* that organises the whole affair, the Champagne corks were popping in watering holes around Turin and various areas of France.

Runner-up — and deservedly so — was Liverpool's Kenny Dalglish,

our popular Star Writer. With 100 League goals chalked up in both Scotland (Celtic) and England, he emulates the achievements of David McLean (Forfar, Celtic, Third Lanark, Rangers, Dundee, Preston, Sheffield Wednesday and Bradford PA) and Neil Martin (Aldershot, Queen of the South, Hibernian, Sunderland, Coventry, Nottingham Forest, Brighton and Crystal Palace).

Now Dalglish can delight everyone in Britain by marching to another milestone — 100 caps for Scotland!

STUTTGART TOPS

If statistics are anything to go by, Stuttgart will win the Bundesliga in 1988. In 15 of the 20 seasons of the Bundesliga since its inception in 1963, when the winter break halted the action, the club has finished in the top three positions.

But the season so far is an even success with 15 wins, 10 draws and 10 losses, averaging 20 a game.

Worst off are FC Nurnberg, who are 17th, and the first relegation candidates, with nine points from 17 games.

Manchester United owner-director Moten R. has been criticised for not because he knows that they are not a professional game.

They tell me...

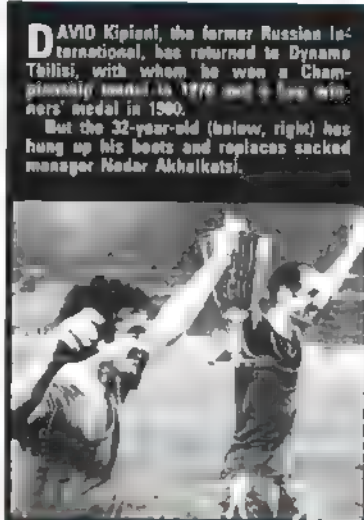
● Czechoslovakian international striker Ladislav Vizek (below) has been voted his country's Player of the Year. The 28-year-old forward has scored 100 League goals during his career with Dukla Prague and 11 in 45 games at national level.

● Carlos Miloc, Uruguayan-born manager of Mexican club Tampico, broke both legs in a road accident.

● Eloy of Sporting Gijon is not the most popular player with the fans. The unfortunate player stepped up to take the first penalty Gijon had been awarded in two years... and shot wide!

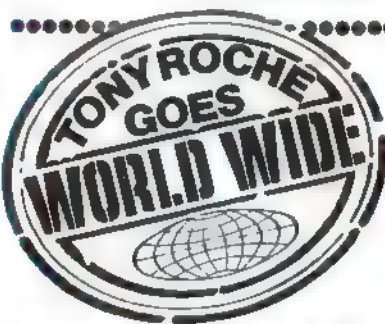
● David Byrne, son of former England and West Ham striker Johnny, is on loan to Estoril of Portugal from Toronto Blizzard.

● Paul Hammond, who played 117 games for Crystal Palace between 1972 and 1977, has joined Toronto Blizzard... and could play for the United States in the 1986 World Cup qualifying games. Hammond has become an American citizen.



DAVID Kipiani, the former Russian international, has returned to Dynamo Tbilisi, with whom he won a Championship medal in 1976 and a Cup winners' medal in 1980.

But the 32-year-old (below, right) has hung up his boots and replaced sacked manager Nodar Akhalkatsi.



SOCRATES America's number one

BRAZILIAN star Socrates has been elected American Player of the Year by journalists from 18 countries throughout the Continent. The award, America's equivalent to the European Footballer of the Year is sponsored in Caracas by the Venezuelan newspaper El Mundo.

The voting went as follows:

1 — Socrates	(Corinthians and Brazil)	59 votes
2 — Ubaldo Fillof	(Flamengo and Argentina)	30 votes
3 — Eder	(At. Mineiro and Brazil)	29 votes
4 — Fernando Morana	(Peñarol and Uruguay)	25 votes
5 — Victor Diogo	(Peñarol and Uruguay)	17 votes
6 — Ricardo Gareca	(Boca Jrs. and Argentina)	15 votes
7 — Rodolfo Rodriguez	(Nacional and Uruguay)	13 votes
8 — Carlos Aguilera	(Nacional and Uruguay)	10 votes
9 — Junior	(Flamengo and Brazil)	8 votes
10 — Ruben Paz	(Internacional and Uruguay)	8 votes

It is interesting to note that the South American Champions, Uruguay, provide five of the top ten players named. In fact, Fernando Morana might have won the award had he not broken his leg during a preliminary South American Cup game.

The past winners are:

- 1971 — Tostao (Brazil)
- 1972 — Cubillas (Peru)
- 1973 — Pele (Brazil)
- 1974 — Figueroa (Chile)
- 1975 — Figueroa (Chile)
- 1976 — Figueroa (Chile)
- 1977 — Zico (Brazil)
- 1978 — Kempes (Argentina)
- 1979 — Maradona (Argentina)
- 1980 — Maradona (Argentina)
- 1981 — Zico (Brazil)
- 1982 — Zico (Brazil)

NB. This award takes in the whole American Continent, not just South America.



ANTHONY Castly whose team for Honduras as sweeper in the last World Cup earned him a transfer to Spanish club Maraga is at war with his national F.A.

After 15 months and only five games in Spain, he returned home to Real Madrid. But Castly refuses to play again for his country because the fee is not high enough.



● The State Championships are ending in Brazil and in Rio, Fluminense won the title in a three-way play-off with Flamengo and Bangu, while in Sao Paulo, it was Corinthians Champions and Sao Paulo runners-up.

● At the halfway mark in the Belgian season, 413 goals were scored in 153 games, 335 players were booked, a record 24 were sent-off, 55 penalties were awarded and the average attendance was 9,725, some 200 down on last season.

● Italy has turned down an invitation to play in a special tournament to mark the 70th anniversary of the Brazilian F.A. But they are willing to play Brazil in November.

● Kenya is determined to build a powerful international team and as a first step has told all players selected by the country that they no longer play for their clubs. From now on the Kenyan F.A. pay the wages!

● West German manager Jupp Derwall is fuming! It appears the nation's version of Playboy Magazine recently published his private telephone number.



MASSIMO Bonini of Juventus, one of the most exciting players in the Italian League, has decided to opt for Italian nationality in order to become eligible for the national team.

Bonini was born in San Marino and FIFA recently decreed that players from the tiny republic were not Italian and therefore not allowed to play for the "Azzuri".

HAMBURG manager Gunter Netzer is beginning to totter under the pressure of player problems and terrace criticism. The reigning Bundesliga Champions are out of the European Cup, beaten by Aberdeen in the Super Cup, sliding down the table... and have now been hit by a £250,000 tax bill.

**STEWART
ROBSON**
Arsenal



SHOOT!

Dons out to K.O. Champs



OFF the field Alex Ferguson and Jim McLean are the best of friends.

They take the strain off the relentless pursuit of glory for their clubs Aberdeen and Dundee United by phoning each other and sharing a joke.

But when they are in their respective dugouts and their teams are in frantic action against each other they are the game's fiercest rivals.

Neither can tolerate defeat. Both demand triumph ... and that situation certainly won't change on Saturday (January 21st) at Pittodrie when The Dons, favourites for this season's Premier Division title, collide with reigning Champions United after last term's hard fought and well-deserved success.

No quarter will be asked or given as United, trailing at the moment, look for revenge following a 2-0 defeat at home by Aberdeen two months ago.

Who will emerge victorious after this encounter? Fergie's Furies or McLean's Marauders?

One thing is clear — the fans are on a winner and Pittodrie will be a 24,000 sell-out in this latest episode of the New Firm.

Aberdeen's elegant midfielder **Dougie Bell**, the man Gordon Strachan rates as the most skilful player at the club, says:

"We are in the driving seat at the moment and there's no way we're going to slip.

"United have a great record at Pittodrie and we realise we will have to be at our best. But if we repeat the form that brought us two points from the Tannadice game we should collect another victory that will help us take their crown."

David Narey, the ultra calm and so controlled sweeper of Dundee United says:

"Everyone at Tannadice realises the importance of this match.

"We didn't play at all well when we met last time, but Pittodrie has been a happy hunting ground for us in the past and I'm certain we can get the right result.

"I recall last season when United went to Pittodrie knowing we had to win to be given any chance of lifting the title — and we did just that in a 2-1 victory.

"A repeat on Saturday would suit us just fine. United haven't given up hope of retaining the Championship just yet."



Narey's
Narey believes
Aberdeen can still
be caught

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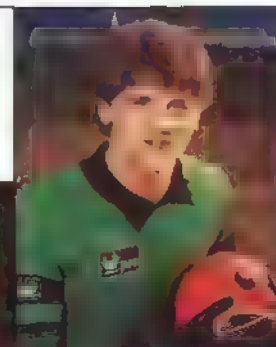
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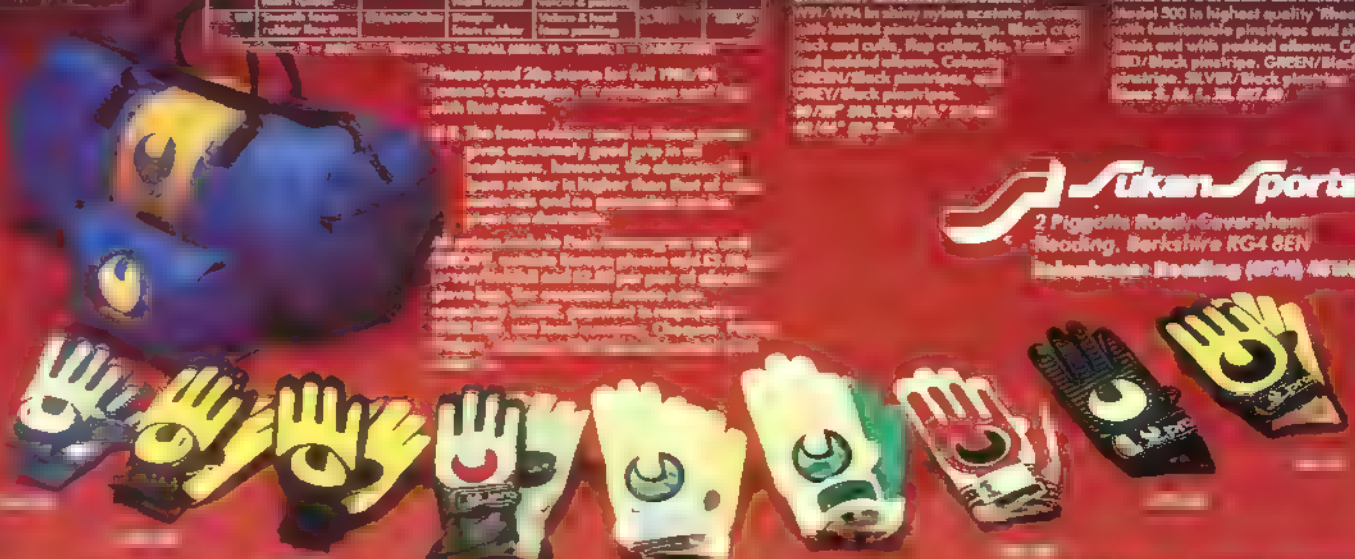
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Quiz

Compiled by John Hamon

True or False?

1 Southampton full-back Mick Mills (right) was awarded the M.B.E. in the New Year's Honours List.

2 Mike Channon of Norwich City appeared in the 1966 World Cup Finals for England against France.

3 Leicester City striker Steve Lynex made his Football League debut while with Birmingham City.

4 Brighton and Hove Albion were previously known as Brighton and Hove Rangers.

Defenders

1 Southampton's Ken Armstrong was signed by manager Lawrie McMenemy from which Scottish club during the close season?

2 Which one of these players — Bobby McDonald (Oxford), Alan Whitehead (Brentford) and Steve Cammack (Scunthorpe) — does not normally play in defence for their Third Division club?



3 Who played in the number two and three shirts for Manchester United in their successful F.A. Cup winning side of 1983 against Brighton in the replay?

4 Did Phil Thompson, Emllyn Hughes or Tommy Smith captain Liverpool to their first European Cup Final win against Borussia Moenchengladbach in 1977 in Rome?



Cups and Trophies

1 Following their European Cup Final victory against Bayern Munich in 1982, Aston Villa won another trophy last season. What was it?

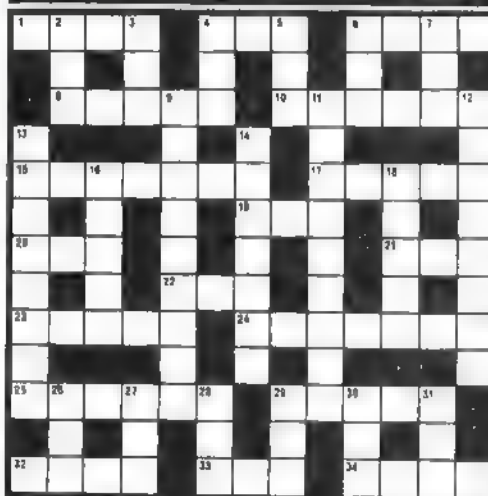
2 In 1983, Kenny Dalglish of Liverpool became only the second player to win the Football Writers' Footballer of the Year Award and the P.F.A.'s equivalent in the same season. Who carried off both awards previously and in which season?

3 Which Scottish Premier Division club were voted European Team of the Year for 1983?

4 Did Birmingham's Billy Wright (left) appear for his former club, Everton, in the 1976-77 League Cup Final when they lost 3-2 to Aston Villa in a second replay?

5 Six players who have appeared in the Football League have been voted European Footballer of the Year. Stanley Matthews was the first winner in 1956 ... Name the other five.

SHOOT! CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- (1) Kevin —, Manchester City defender (4)
- (4) — Corrigan, Brighton 'keeper' (3)
- (6) Collin —, Sunderland striker (4)
- (8) The 1983 European Cup — was held in Athens. (5)
- (10) Danny —, Spurs defender (6)
- (15) Neil —, Brighton winger. (7)
- (17) — Worthington, Notts County defender (5)
- (19) Bre-t-r-r, The Bees from Griffin Park. (3)
- (20) Pat R—, Wadford defender (3)
- (21) Eric —, Brighton defender (3)
- (22) — Davies, former Welsh International 'keeper' (3)
- (23) The V—, Charlton Athletic's ground (5)
- (24) Goals often result from them! (7)
- (25) — Road, ground of Hibernian (6)
- (29) Number of clubs in the First Division whose names begin with the letter 'L' (5)
- (32) — Wark, Ipswich Town midfielder (4)
- (33) F—, noord, famous Dutch club. (3)
- (34) — City, Fourth Division club from Bootham Crescent. (4)

DOWN

- (2) Everton "The T—-ses". (3)
- (3) See 29 Down (3)

- (4) Martin —, WBA midfield player (3)
- (5) Adrian H—, Everton striker (3)
- (6) Steve —, West Ham striker (3)
- (7) Les —, Luton 'keeper' (3)
- (9) Sam —, Coventry City defender (3)
- (11) Rob —, Sunderland defender (3)
- (12) — Park, ground of Crystal Palace. (8)
- (13) The 6th, 7th, 8th, 12th, 1st, 2nd, 13th and 9th letters of Manchester City (8)
- (14) Terry —, QPR captain (7)

- (16) "Perfect" from the initial letters of Exeter, Arsenal, Derby, Leeds and Ipswich (5)
- (18) Howard —, Birmingham City winger (5)
- (26) Reuben —, Southampton defender (3)
- (27) Number of clubs in the Scottish Premier Division (3)
- (28) Glenn —, Newcastle defender (3)
- (29 & 31) Ground of Millwall. (3)
- (30) — Wilkins, Manchester United midfielder (3)
- (31) Mick P—, WBA striker (3)

Computer puzzle

Programme this star player by plugging in the gaps in his career.

1 Todd began his League career in the North-East with —.

2 After 173 League games, the England defender was transferred to — for £180,000.

3 Todd made 293 League appearances and scored six goals before he was on the move for £330,000 to —.

4 A short stay of just 32 League games and Todd was signed by —.

5 At the start of last season, Nottingham Forest manager Brian Clough bought him. Todd made his full England debut against — in May, 1972 when England lost 1-0 at Wembley.



COLIN TODD

ANSWERS

CROSSWORD
 1. Kevin Keegan
 2. The Tynes
 3. See 29 Down (3)
 4. Martin Peters
 5. Adrian Heath
 6. Steve Bruce
 7. Les Fothergill
 8. The Villa
 9. Sam Allardyce
 10. Danny Rye
 11. Rob Lee
 12. Selhurst
 13. The 6th, 7th, 8th, 12th, 1st, 2nd, 13th and 9th letters of Manchester City
 14. Terry Connor
 15. Neil Martin
 16. Perfect
 17. Worthington
 18. Howard Kendall
 19. Breckton
 20. Pat Riddle
 21. Eric Black
 22. Davies
 23. The Valley
 24. Goals often result from them!
 25. Road
 26. Reuben
 27. Number of clubs in the Scottish Premier Division
 28. Glenn
 29 & 31. Ground of Millwall
 30. Wilkins
 31. Mick Parry

MEET THE Superstars

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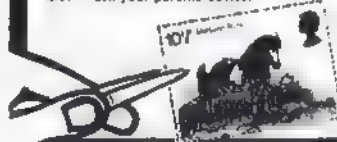
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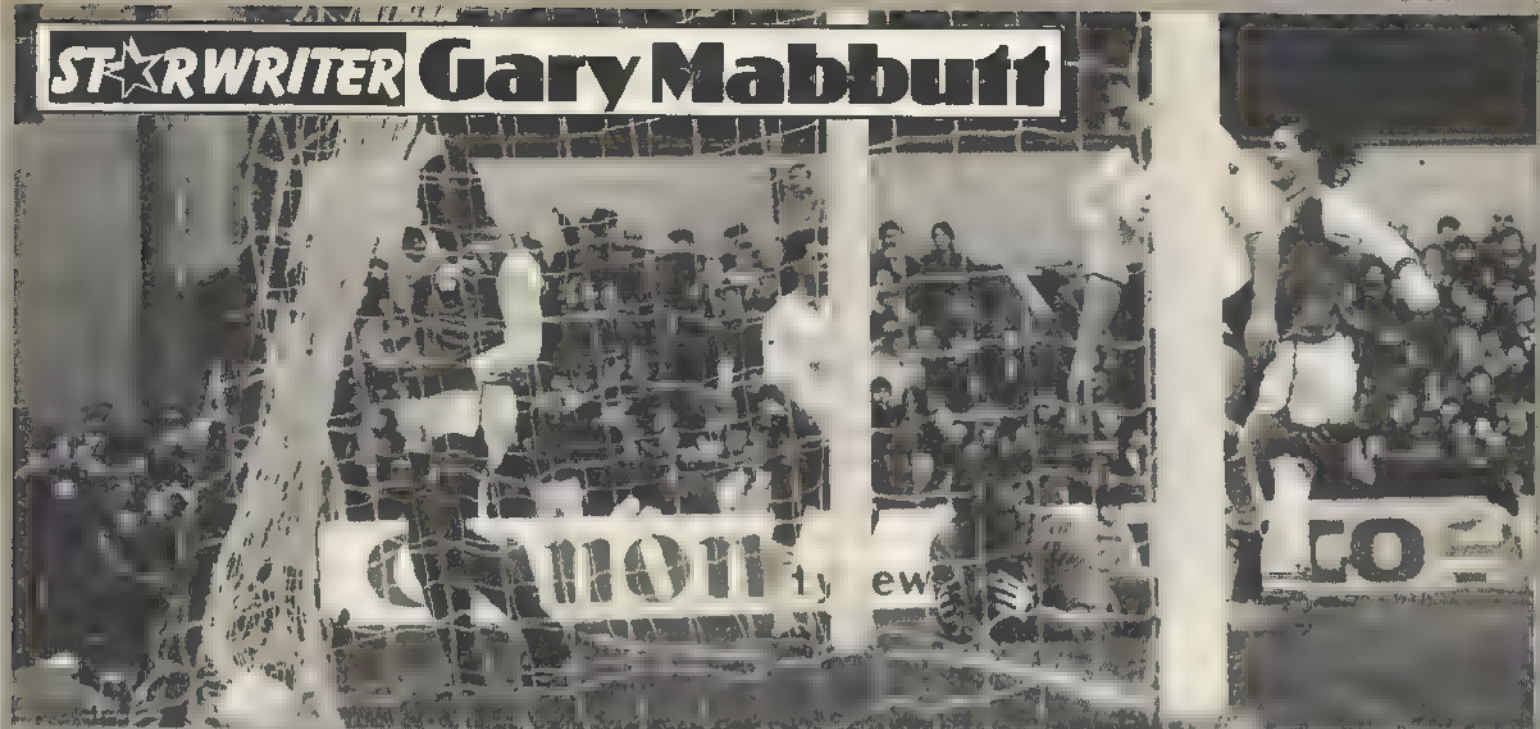
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DON'T BLAME RAY!

FOR the first time I'm going to publicly disagree with something my manager, Keith Burkinshaw, has said.

After Spurs had gone six League games without a win the boss wrote off our Championship chances with the words: "It looks a million miles away!"

Things certainly looked black after we'd collected only one point from 12 following a holiday period that threw a cloud of gloom over the club.

I've always been one for looking for that silver lining, though. We only need to get our act together again and hit a winning streak and, with three points for a win, we could be right back challenging as we were at the end of November.

Best

After a mediocre start to the season we were playing somewhere near our best and were fourth in the League.

We'd also earned our passage into the UEFA Cup Quarter-Finals with a marvellous two-leg win over Bayern Munich.

Then our injury list lengthened and I, along with some others, found myself going for treatment instead of training.

But don't think I'll blame the team's nightmarish spell entirely on injuries. A large squad bulging with talent should have allowed us to cope.

The main trouble has been the inability of drafted-in players to strike up the right relationship with the rest of the team.

Consequently, we've lacked balance, wobbling when the



pressure is on. It's in defence we've been hardest hit, giving away goals like Father Christmas handing out presents! For a long time our fans were patient and continued to give us whole-hearted support. But then the frustration got to them. To some extent I sympathise with them. After all, they pay the wages, which entitles them to be critical of players they know have the ability to do better. What I dislike is the way they

ABOVE: Ray Clemence was not the only Spurs player at fault during our 4-2 defeat by Arsenal.

LEFT: I'm sure Alan Brazil will soon be back to his devastating best in front of goal.

have singled out some players for special treatment. Ray Clemence, for instance. His track record is second to none, and I still rank him alongside that other outstanding 'keeper, Peter Shilton.

Even a player of Ray's calibre can't be expected to perform miracles behind a constantly changing back-four which fails to knit together.

At Liverpool, where he forged his reputation as one of England's greatest goal-minders, he was able to establish a great understanding with defenders, several of whom went through entire seasons as ever-present.

At Spurs, for instance, Ray has already had to suffer five changes at right-back: Danny Thomas, Stevie Perryman, Gary O'Reilly, Gary Stevens, and Chris Hughson.

Ray is also unfortunate that whenever he makes a mistake there's rarely anyone to cover up for him and it usually results in a goal.

Our strikers, particularly Alan Brazil, have also been right out of luck, hitting and missing when normally they would have found the net.

Alan is a great striker, going through the lean spell that afflicts every one of his type at some time.

Remember, not so long ago Kenny Dalglish went many months without a single League goal and then started banging them in like mad.

Watching the team struggle, as I have been doing, is worse than

playing. I can't wait to get back into the first team after playing in the reserves to regain my match fitness following a couple of months lay-off.

I shouldn't find it as difficult to adjust as Ossie Ardiles did when he returned for that disastrous Boxing Day game against Arsenal.

But as Ossie had been sidelined for almost a year with a much more serious injury than mine, it wasn't too surprising that he lacked his old sharpness.

Disagree

Again I must disagree with the boss, who was quoted as saying that he wondered whether the best of Ossie was in the past.

Having watched Ossie in training and with the reserves, I can confidently assure Spurs fans that he is looking more and more like his old self and will turn on the magic again for us.

Perhaps both Ossie and I will be back in action for this Saturday's away League game with Everton.

Goodison Park was a bogey ground for us last season, when we lost in both the League and F.A. Cup.

Everton are a Jekyll and Hyde side, good one week and bad the next.

If Spurs can start firing on all 11 cylinders, we'll have those Evertonians feeling as blue as their shirts.

Gary Mabbutt

BIG MATCHES OF THE DAY

Friday, 20th January

Aston Villa v Liverpool

THERE was a time when Liverpool could seldom extract any points from their visits to Villa Park — a run of 18 League games with only one win and three draws between 1930 and 1964. Since then, however, they have suffered only three defeats in 11 visits, with one game drawn. Villa's latest win over Liverpool was on this ground in January, 1981, when the two clubs were leading the First Division. Then Villa gained a 2-0 victory with goals by Peter Withe and Dennis Mortimer.

Saturday, 21st January

Everton v Spurs

EARLIER this season Everton highlighted the weaknesses in the Spurs rearguard when beating them 2-1 at White Hart Lane. If Everton can win on Saturday it will be their first League double over the Londoners since season 1969-70. Spurs lost 3-2 at Goodison then, and although they have now had a run of 13 League visits to Everton without a win, they have drawn seven of these games.

Leicester v Coventry

LEICESTER manager Gordon Milne will be especially keen that the club he formerly managed do not win at Filbert Street on Saturday. Coventry have won five of their last six League games at Leicester. The home side's only win in this spell was 3-1 in March, 1977, when they were well above Coventry in the First Division.

Man. Utd v Southampton

SOUTHAMPTON have not won at Old Trafford since a 2-1 victory in October, 1968, but they have drawn four of their last seven visits, including 1-1 last season when Martin Foyle equalised after Bryan Robson had given United the lead. Saints have since beaten United 3-0 at The Dell.

West Ham v WBA

THIS WILL be Albion's 29th League visit to Upton Park. They won there 1-0 last season when Peter Eastoe scored an early goal before they lost Cyrille Regis with a face injury. If Albion can win on Saturday it will only be the second time they have won two in a row on this ground.

Aberdeen v Dundee United

GORDON STRACHAN has scored for The Dons in each of United's last three Premier Division visits, but although Aberdeen won the first of those games 5-1 they have since lost twice at home to The Terrors. The score was 2-1 on both occasions. Indeed, United have won six and drawn four of their 17 Premier Division games at Pittodrie. Their best win here in recent times was 3-0 in November, 1979.



Bonanza!

THE FIRST DIVISION is in for a bonanza next season — that's the view of Manchester City chairman Peter Swales (above).

He said: "The Second Division is lucky to have Sheffield Wednesday, Manchester City, Newcastle and Chelsea battling for promotion. No disrespect to the other clubs, but they're the four biggest in the Division."

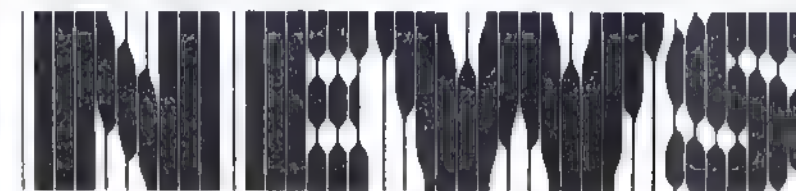
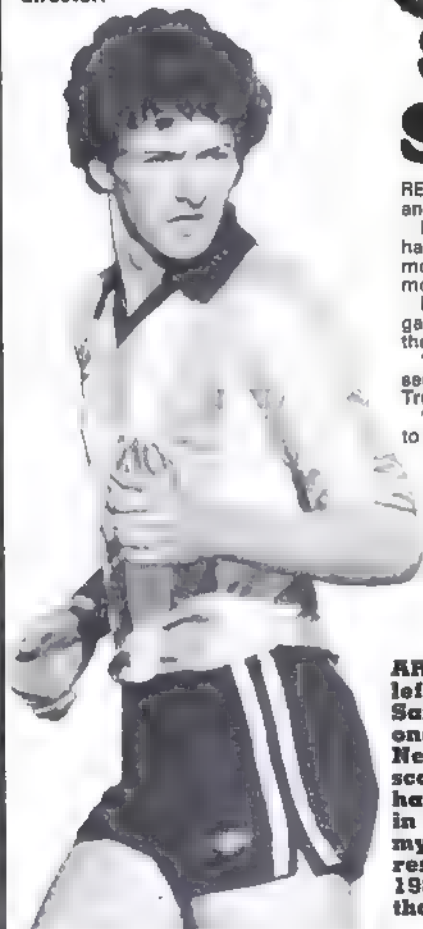
"It's not only created interest in Division Two, but also in the First Division where everyone is thinking they could have three big clubs up with them next season."

"You won't find many teams better supported than Newcastle or ourselves. When we travel to places such as Shrewsbury or Carlisle we take almost as many fans as the home team has in the first place."

ATHENIAN LEAGUE strugglers Camberley Town are hoping pop power can get them climbing up the charts again.

For the Surrey side have a new chairman — none other than wealthy rock star Rick Wakeman.

The 34-year-old world-famous musician is a former Brentford director.



BY MARK IRWIN



BIRMINGHAM full-back Dave Langan, out of action for a year with a back injury, is ready to make his comeback in the near future.

But Langan, who underwent a five-hour operation at the beginning of the season, is still in dispute with City about his contract and a move may be on the cards once he has proved his fitness again.

Did you know?

No Scotsman has topped the Football League's goalscorers' list since Ted MacDougall netted 33 Third Division goals for Bournemouth back in 1971-72. What chances of Charlie Nicholas breaking that 12-year run this season?

MAGIC MUHREN

AS MANCHESTER UNITED entered the New Year with the best chance for a long time of winning the First Division Championship, manager Ron Atkinson paid a handsome tribute to midfielder star Arnold Muhren (left).

Muhren has missed some key games with a calf muscle injury, but Atkinson is hoping for a clean bill of health from him in the second half of the season.

He says: "When we have played well and scored goals has been when Arnold has been in the team. He makes the rest of the team play and also enables Bryan Robson to play in his best position in the centre of midfield."

NORTHERN IRELAND international goalkeeper Jim Platt has been appointed player-manager of Ballymena United.

Platt returned to Ballymena at the start of the season following a 13-year spell with Middlesbrough.

SENIOR SERVICE

READING goal ace Trevor Senior is helping an injured fan in his fight for recovery.

Eighteen-year-old namesake Paul Senior has been in a coma since falling off his motorbike and fracturing his skull two months ago.

But the youngster is now gradually regaining consciousness following a visit by the League's leading marksman.

"I popped in to see him and he certainly seemed to know someone was there," said Trevor (left).

"I also recorded a message on a cassette to be played to him. Hopefully, it will help him as well."

Paul is now out of the intensive care unit at the Royal Berks Hospital, Reading.

"It was marvellous of Trevor to see him," said Paul's mother Elaine.

"I play the tape to him as much as possible and I'm sure it's good for him."

ARSENAL left-back Kenny Sansom has just one hope for the New Year... to score a goal. "I haven't scored in 18 months, so my main resolution for 1984 is to do just that."

IT may be good for you, but it's not as welcome as a well-earned breather! Ipswich winger Kevin O'Callaghan laps up the peace and quiet of Villa Park... clearly undisturbed by those noisy supporter types who tend to make such a racket on the terraces.



Albion cutback

COST CONSCIOUS West Brom chairman Sid Lucas has ordered team boss Ron Wylie to trim the players' wage bill.

Lucas revealed that Albion are now losing £16,000 a week and said: "The board are ambitious and we want the club to survive and be successful. But that success must be achieved within the framework of the current economic climate. Nobody wants to be successful and then go bankrupt."

WHILE clubs throughout Britain are cutting back on their youth and scouting systems to save costs, Rangers are planning to create two new youth teams.

New manager Jock Wallace wants an Under-14 team and an Under-16 team to add to the already existing Under-15 and Under-18 sides.

He explains: "I want the best youngsters to come to Ibrox and teams like this play an important part in their development."

"The more young lads we have at the club, the better it will be for our future."

MORTIMER'S FUTURE IN THE BALANCE

ASTON Villa midfielder star Dennis Mortimer is still uncertain about his Villa Park future despite his consistent performances this season.

Mortimer looked to be on his way out at the end of last season but has again emerged as a key member of the side in the enforced absence of Gordon Cowans, who might not even be fit for the start of next season.

Says the former Villa captain: "It all comes down to money. Villa must decide whether it is in their best interests to pay me my weekly wage or whether it would be better for them to use that money to pay three or four younger members of the staff."

"They were prepared to let me go last summer because they wanted to reduce the size of the playing staff. But that cutback has now been achieved, so I don't know where I stand."

"I've had a new lease of life this season and would love the chance to sign a one-year contract in the summer."

Boss in boots and gloves!

WHAT does a manager do when both his goalkeepers are injured before an important Cup tie? Simple. He pulls on the gloves himself!

At least, that's what Wrexham manager Bobby Roberts did when Stuart Parker and Kevin Jones were both ruled out of the Welsh Cup Third Round tie with Worcester City.

And the 44-year-old Roberts, who made more than 300 League appearances in midfield for Leicester and Mansfield, was the star of the night as Wrexham held on for a 1-1 draw.

GEORGE 'MAC' MURRAY is one soccer fan who certainly believes in putting his hand in his pocket to help out his favourites.

Middlesbrough's directors were "staggered" by George's generosity when he enrolled the 426-strong workforce at his Hartlepool engineering firm as members of a fund-raising scheme.

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A SPECIAL group of boys will be chosen to attend a school where football is the most important subject of the week.

The dream-school will be established at Lilleshall Sports Centre by the Football Association next September.

The only qualification for entry is that boys must be blessed with exceptional football talent.

Boys between the ages of 14 and 15 will be chosen by a panel of football experts, which will include England manager Bobby Robson.

F.A. secretary Ted Croker admits that selection will be a major problem.

"Many of the boys will be known to us already," he says. "But we will make decisions. The first intake will be 25 boys."

ON THE MOVE

Alan Starling	Huddersfield to Bradford	Free
Ray Train (right)	Oxford to Bournemouth	Free
Travor Lee	Bournemouth to Cardiff	£2,000
Glenn Roeder	QPR to Newcastle	£120,000
Lee Chapman	Arsenal to Sunderland	£100,000
David Riley	Keyworth Utd to Forest	n/a
Trevor Whymark	Grimsby to Southend	£12,000

LEEDS UNITED'S new chairman is Leslie Silver, formerly vice-chairman at Elland Road. He succeeds Manny Cousins, who has stepped down because of ill health.



NEW COACH at Third Division Rotherham United is Maurice Setters. The former West Bromwich, Manchester United and Stoke player lost his job as Sheffield Wednesday's coach earlier last year.

THERE is unlikely to be a match this year like last November's Luton-Birmingham match. The score was 1-1, the attendance, 11,111 and the Birmingham goalscorer was Robert Hopkins — who wore the number 11 shirt.

IT HAPPENED THIS WEEK

Jan 21, 1961: Playing for Fulham against Sheffield Wednesday, Alan Mullery puts through his own goal just 30 seconds into the game — before an opponent has touched the ball!

Jan 21, 1978: Liverpool lose at Anfield to Birmingham, their last home defeat in 85 games before Leicester City win on January 31, 1981.

Jan 22, 1927: The meeting of Arsenal and Sheffield United at Highbury is the first soccer match to be broadcast in Britain.

Jan 23, 1980: Billy Bremner makes his Football League debut for Leeds United against Chelsea.

Jan 24, 1979: Phil Boyer, playing for Southampton against Leeds United, becomes the only player to be sent-off three times in the Football League Cup.

Jan 26, 1963: The Pools Panel of "guessed" results of postponed matches goes into action for the first time.

Jan 26, 1965: Ten former Football League players are jailed at Nottingham Assizes after being found guilty of conspiracy to fix results of matches.

Jan 25, 1978: David Pleat is appointed manager of Luton Town.



Jan 26, 1982: Clive Allen (above) scores four times in a 5-1 QPR defeat of Blackpool in an F.A. Cup tie (his father, Les, scored five for Spurs against Crewe Alexandra in the F.A. Cup on Feb. 3, 1960).

Jan 26, 1980: Ian Callaghan playing for Swansea City against Reading, sets up a record by appearing in his 85th F.A. Cup tie.

Jan 27, 1979: Terry Hibbit captains Newcastle United an young brother Ken captains Wolves in an F.A. Cup Fourth Round tie between the teams.

GO North, young man! That is the conviction that has taken Lee Chapman from the lush pastures of Highbury to the harsher climes of Sunderland.

Now the former England Under-21 striker believes his £100,000 transfer to Roker Park may be the turning point of his career.



Chapman was disappointed not to get a regular run in the Arsenal team and was glad to sign for Sunderland.

Lee Chapman says

'South for style— North for Championships'

"In the North, they win Championships; in the South, they don't," he states. "I don't know why—but I do know it's true. The facts speak for themselves over the last decade or so.

"In the North, teams have the consistency and the determination to take on a 42 match programme and finish up on top of the pile.

"Ask anyone which club they fancy for the First Division title this season and the only real doubt seems to be whether it will be Liverpool or Manchester United."

It was in Arsenal's double campaign of 1970-71 that a team from the South last took the Championship. Since then, it has been eight Championships between Liverpool and Leeds (once) while the Midlands have weighed in with four titles.

But the strapping striker does not quit London firing broadsides from all directions.

"When it comes to style, I believe that the teams from the South have the edge. That is why they so often come through in Cup football.

"In the same period since 1970-71, sides of 'touch' ability like

Arsenal, Tottenham and West Ham have won eight F.A. Cup Finals for the South. They always seem to find the inspiration for 'one off' Cup ties but seldom the week-by-week form to win the First Division.

"I did not leave Highbury saying 'Southern softies' because I am sure that there are just as many hard players there as you find in Northern teams. But, for whatever reason, Southern sides do not come together so solidly over a nine month season as those from the North."

Chapman leaves Highbury, however, with one acknowledged debt to Arsenal. He arrived from Stoke as a £500,000 matchwinner with the world at his feet: he left after 16 months for £100,000 with

a run of eight matches as his best spell.

"I do not regret the experience," he says. "I left Stoke as the player who could do no wrong. At Highbury, I found out that the game can kick you in the teeth. I've discovered how to cope with that kind of setback... to come through it still believing in myself."

There is no animosity, either, towards anyone at Highbury. "Obviously I was disappointed at having no more than eight games in one stretch, but that was a management decision and all players have to go along with them.

"Nor can I blame Arsenal for signing Charlie Nicholas exactly 12 months after me. Arsenal didn't

have a good season in 1982-83 and the supporters were looking for excitement and a spectacular swoop: signing Charlie provided exactly that 'buzz' around North London.

"That is all in the past and my one and only concern now is to score as many goals as I can for Sunderland. I'd like ten or so before the end of the season.

"I have signed for a club where I can get my career back into top gear—that's my aim.

"My first 90 minutes in a Sunderland shirt told me so much about what was ahead. I always knew that they loved their football in the North-East but I never appreciated quite how much until that first game when we beat Luton 2-0.

"There were 20,000 at Roker Park and they sounded like 40,000 as we went two goals ahead. That Roker roar is famous throughout football and when you've got it behind you, there is a 'lift' almost impossible to put into words. It is exactly what I need."

For the second time in his career, the 24-year-old Chapman teams up with Alan Durban. "He was the manager at Stoke who signed me from school and gave me my First Division debut after teaching me all the basics of professional football.

"Around that time at Stoke, he was also directing young players such as Garth Crooks, Paul

Bracewell and Adrian Heath. At Sunderland, he seems to be working towards the same breakthrough. I was amazed to find that apart from Leighton James the oldest player in the side is 26-year-old Gary Rowell!

"It's a young squad that has been put together with the target of achieving more success for a great club. In age, talent, balance and ability, everything augurs well for the future.

"This season we have the chance of taking the first step towards longer term ambitions by qualifying for Europe."

Next Week: West Ham's Scouser Alvin Martin hits back for the South

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BIG MATCH CROSSTALK

JOHN HOLLINS (Chelsea) and MIKE LYONS (Sheffield Wednesday) come face to face to discuss Saturday's clash at Stamford Bridge

Promotion pointer?

football, playing alongside youngsters?

HOLLINS: I certainly do, although I find the demands of coaching and playing pretty severe. It's an exciting experience playing with the youngsters. They are quite big and strong, so I tend to expect so much from them. But they are keen to learn and do everything you tell them.

LYONS: Our young lads are the same. And they bring the best out in me. Mind you, I don't think I have ever trained harder in my life or been fitter. That's down to Howard Wilkinson and his determination to push this club back into the First Division. Returning to the kids, one reason I feel we are doing well this season is that they have now had three or four years' experience and are contributing so much more.

HOLLINS: I see that you had a little set-back over Christmas with two defeats, but then bounced straight back with that 3-0 win over Oldham. We, too, have always managed to zoom back into a victory following a setback. It's no good taking several games to get over a defeat, however disappointing it might be.

LYONS: I suppose your fans at The Bridge are getting as excited as ours at the thought of a possible return to the First Division. But I don't worry about the future very much — it's the present which counts in my book.

HOLLINS: Dead right, Mike. If we beat you in this match, people may be convinced we are going to make it. There is still a long way to go. And if it stays neck and neck like this right up to the death in May, it's going to be tremendously exciting. I believe we are good enough to be there and our resolve is firm ... we want to be there.

LYONS: Well, we also think we shall get promotion. But I reckon you should be coming up with us, because we rate Chelsea the best side we played up to the turn of the year. You had plenty of ideas and were strong and sharp up front. You wanted to attack, which we always do, and although we beat you 2-1, I think you impressed a lot of people at Hillsborough that day.

HOLLINS: Thanks for saying so, and I remember the game well. It was pretty hot that day. You scored Wednesday's first goal, and Gary Megson the second. We've got to look ahead, though. I don't know whether everyone is right to say it's between four of us for promotion — our two clubs plus Manchester City and Newcastle. I'm not ruling out opposition from teams like Carlisle, Grimsby and Huddersfield. Call them unfashionable if you like, but they've done well and been pretty consistent. And they are not far behind now.

LYONS: All the four favourites have the potential to do well in Division One because they are

LYONS: I'm looking forward to our battle, John, but I have to say I have hardly thought about it yet for two very good reasons. We have had a Yorkshire derby F.A. Cup Third Round tie against Barnsley, which we won 1-0, and an even harder Milk Cup Quarter-Final against Liverpool, to think about. But I know the match at Stamford Bridge will be a real humdinger. As far as I'm concerned, the more big games you play, the better. But our priority remains the League and promotion. I believe that bad sides can win Cups sometimes; but they never win titles.

HOLLINS: I agree, Mike. The demands of consistency over 42 games make certain of that. That's why I am pleased that going into January, we could say we had only been once out of the top three since the start, back in August. That is a sign of a decent side.

LYONS: We, too, have been pleased about staying right up there for so long. But I'm sure your team has been helped by having you around. As a fine, experienced professional, you're having a big influence on the younger players in your side. Do you still enjoy your

"big" clubs. I'm sure we would both hold our own up there and clubs like Newcastle and City, with their followings, could also do well. But you are right in saying how far there is to go. With so many points still to play for, literally anything is possible yet.



Lyons crashes Wednesday's first goal in their 2-1 win against Chelsea at Hillsborough in September.

Focus

GARY BAILEY

Manchester United

Full name: Gary Richard Bailey.
Birthplace and date: In Ipswich on August 9th, 1958. Although I was born in England, my family moved to South Africa soon after and that was where I grew up.
Height and weight: 6ft 2ins, 13 stone.
Married: No.
Home: I have a nice detached house in the South Manchester area.
Car: Ford Sierra XR4i.

Previous clubs: I had no previous professional clubs, but I did play for Wits University in South Africa before coming over to England and signing for United in 1978.
Nickname: I don't have one.

Biggest influence on career: As you can imagine my father has played a major part in my career. Because he had won the Football League Championship as a goalkeeper I was naturally keen to follow him and he guided my career as a youngster.

Boyhood hero: The former England goalkeeper Gordon Banks. I followed his career very closely because he was the best in the world.

Team you supported as a boy: Like so many people in South Africa, I was very keen on United so signing for them was tremendous. I also followed Ipswich, because my father Roy had been their goalkeeper when they won the League in 1962.

Most memorable match: Without a doubt it has to be last season's F.A. Cup Final replay.

Favourite current player: My United team-mate Bryan Robson. Playing behind him every week has made me realise that he really is the complete footballer.

Biggest disappointment: Losing the 1979 F.A. Cup Final to Arsenal. We'd fought back from 2-0 down to equalise, but with virtually the last kick of the game Alan Sunderland scored Arsenal's winner. I took quite a lot of criticism for that goal and it took me quite a while to get over it.

International Honours: England Under-21 and 'B' team caps.

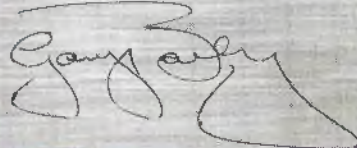
Club Honours: F.A. Cup runner-up in 1979, F.A. Cup winner in 1983 and Charity Shield winner in 1983.

Hobbies: I've always been fascinated by computers. I have my own unit at home and also use those at Manchester University as part of a degree I've been doing.

Favourite other sport: Tennis.
Favourite showbusiness star: I really like Sylvester Stallone. I thought he was great in the Rocky films.

Ambitions for 1983-84: To win the League Championship with United. We're convinced we can stop Liverpool's bid for a title hat-trick, and I want to get a Championship medal to go with dad's.

Long-term ambition: To become an England regular and play in the World Cup Finals.



SHOOT!